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THE  
ODYSSEY  
OF  
HOMER.

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Translated by  
ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

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For T. OSBORNE, C. HITCH and L. HAWES, JOHN RIVINGTON,  
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1888, Aug. 11.

Gift of  
Prof. H. W. Torrey  
of Cambridge.

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A  
GENERAL VIEW  
OF THE  
EPICK POEM,  
AND OF THE  
ILIAD and ODYSSEY.  
Extracted from BOSSU.

SECT. I.

**T**HE Fables of Poets were originally employed in representing the *Divine Nature* \*, according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime Subject occasioned the first Poets to be called Divines, and Poetry the *Language of the Gods*. They divided the divine Attributes

\* *Of the Nature of Epick Poetry.*

iv A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

into so many Persons; because the infirmity of a human Mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much Power and Action in a Simplicity so great and indivisible as that of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

They could not describe the Operations of this Almighty Cause, without speaking at the same time of its Effects: so that to Divinity they added *Physiology*, and treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their Allegorical Expressions.

But *Man* being the chief and most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful to Poets than this Subject; they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of *Morality* after the same manner as they did that of Divinity and Philosophy: and from Morality thus treated, is formed that kind of Poem and Fable which we call *Epick*.

The Poets did the same in Morality, that the Divines had done in Divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the Divine Nature, (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single Idea of the Only One God into several Persons, under the different names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Neptune* and the rest.

and of the I L I A D and O D Y S S E Y. v

And on the other hand, the nature of Moral Philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general; the Epick Poets were obliged to unite in one single Idea, in one and the same Person, and in an Action which appeared singular, all that looked like it in different persons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many *Species* under their *Genus*.

The Presence of the Deity, and the Care such an august Cause is to be supposed to take about any action, obliges the Poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by <sup>b</sup> Kings and Princes. It obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the Divine Persons he introduces. <sup>c</sup> To this end serve the poetical and figurative Expression, and the Majesty of the Heroick Verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all Probability: therefore the Poet should take a peculiar care as to that point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without Probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since Precepts ought to be <sup>d</sup> concise, to be the more easily conceived, and less oppress the

<sup>b</sup> Res gestæ regumque ducumque. *Hor. Art. Poet.*

<sup>c</sup> — — — Cui mens diviniore atque os

Magna sonaturum, des Nominis hujus honorem. *Horat.*

<sup>d</sup> Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. *Hor. Poet.*

vi A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

memory; and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single Idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the Poets have reduced all to one single action, under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observed of the nature of the Epick Poem, gives us a just Idea of it, and we may define it thus:

“ The Epick Poem is a discourse invented by  
“ art, to form the Manners, by such instruc-  
“ tions as are disguised under the allegories of  
“ some one important Action, which is related  
“ in verse, after a probable, diverting and sur-  
“ prising manner.”

S E C T. II.

‘ IN every design which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus since the End of the Epick Poem is to regulate the Manners, it is with this first view the Poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the Philosophical and the Poetical doctrine of Manners.

\* Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum. *Hor. Poet.*

† *The Fable of the Iliad.*

The Schoolmen content themselves with treating of Virtues and Vices in general: the instructions they give are proper for all States, People, and for all Ages. But the Poet has a nearer regard to his own Country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and just he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of Reasoning, than of the power of Insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those, who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now see how *Homer* has acquitted himself in these respects.

He saw the *Grecians*, for whom he designed his Poem, were divided into as many States as they had capital Cities. Each was a Body Politick apart, and had its form of government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct States were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common Enemies. These were two very different sorts of Government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single Poem.

The Poet therefore has made two distinct Fables of them. The one is for *Greece* in general, united into one body, but composed of parts independent on each other; and the other for

each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the Union or rather in the Confederacy of many independent States; experience has always made it appear, “ That nothing so much causes success  
“ as a due subordination, and a right understanding among the chief commanders. And  
“ on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such  
“ confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies and ambition of the different leaders,  
“ and the discontents of submitting to a single  
“ General.” All sorts of States, and in particular the *Grecians*, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loss which both the People and the Princes must of necessity suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

*Homer* then has taken for the foundation of his Fable this great Truth; That a Misunderstanding between Princes is the Ruin of their own States. “ I sing (says he) the Anger of *Achilles*, so pernicious to the *Grecians*, and the  
“ cause of so many Heroes deaths, occasioned by  
“ the Discord and Separation of *Agamemnon* and  
“ that Prince.”

But that this truth may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to sup-



port it. It is necessary in such a design, not only to represent the Confederate States at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate; but to show the same States afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joined all these in one general action.

“ Several Princes independent on one another  
 “ were united against a common enemy. The  
 “ person whom they had elected their General,  
 “ offers an affront to the most valiant of all the  
 “ Confederates. This offended Prince is so far  
 “ provoked, as to relinquish the Union, and ob-  
 “ stinately refuse to fight for the common cause.  
 “ This Misunderstanding gives the enemy such  
 “ an advantage, that the Allies are very near  
 “ quitting their design with dishonour. He  
 “ himself who made the separation, is not ex-  
 “ empt from sharing the misfortune which he  
 “ brought upon his party. For having per-  
 “ mitted his intimate friend to succour them in  
 “ a great necessity, this friend is killed by the  
 “ enemy’s General. Thus the contending Princes  
 “ being both made wiser at their own cost, are  
 “ reconciled, and unite again: then this valiant  
 “ Prince not only obtains the victory in the pub-  
 “ lick cause, but revenges his private wrongs by  
 “ killing with his own hands the author of the  
 “ death of his friend.”

## x A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

This is the first Platform of the Poem, and the Fiction which reduces into one important and universal Action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be rendered Probable by the circumstances of times, places and persons: some persons must be found out, already known by History or otherwise, whom we may with Probability make the actors and personages of this Fable. *Homer* has made choice of the siege of *Troy*, and feigned that this action happened there. To a Phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and cholerick, he has given the name of *Achilles*; that of *Agamemnon* to his General; that of *Heſtor* to the Enemy's Commander, and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the *Greeks* his Auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his Poem; and to gain their approbation by praising them: so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief Personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave Princes and those victorious people all *Grecians*, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the Moral, and to fill up the rest with useless or-

naments and foreign incidents, he extends this Moral by all its necessary consequences. As for instance in the subject before us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among Confederates: it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The Episode of *Patroclus* most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions. For when he appeared in the arms of *Achilles*, the *Trojans*, who took him for that Prince now reconciled and united to the Confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the *Greeks*. But *Patroclus*, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon *Hector* too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true *Achilles* who was clad in his armour, but a Hero of much inferior prowess. So that *Hector* kills him, and regains those advantages which the *Trojans* had lost, on the opinion that *Achilles* was reconciled.

## S E C T. III.

\* THE *Odyſſey* was not deſigned, like the *Iliad*, for the inſtruction of all the States of *Greece* joined in one body, but for each State in particular. As a State is compoſed of two parts; the Head which commands, and the Members which obey; there are inſtructions requiſite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to ſubmit to Government.

There are two Virtues neceſſary to one in authority, Prudence to order, and Care to ſee his orders put in execution. The Prudence of a Politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all ſorts of buſineſs, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of Governments and States. The Care of the Adminiſtration ſuffers not him that has the Government to rely upon others, but requires his own preſence: and Kings who are abſent from their States, are in danger of loſing them, and give occaſion to great diſorders and confuſion.

Theſe two points may be eaſily united in one and the ſame man. “ A King forſakes his Kingdom to viſit the courts of ſeveral Princes, where  
“ he learns the manners and cuſtoms of different  
“ nations. From hence there naturally ariſes a  
“ vaſt number of incidents, of dangers, and of

\* *The Fable of the Odyſſey.*

“ adventures, very useful for a Political institu-  
 “ tion. On the other side, this Absence gives  
 “ way to the disorders which happen in his own  
 “ kingdom, and which end not till his return,  
 “ whose presence only can re-establish all things.”  
 Thus the Absence of a King has the same effects  
 in this Fable, as the Division of the Princes had  
 in the former.

The Subjects have scarce any need but of one  
 general maxim, which is, To suffer themselves  
 to be governed, and to obey faithfully; whatever  
 reason they may imagine against the orders they  
 receive. It is easy to join this instruction with  
 the other, by bestowing on this wise and indus-  
 trious Prince such Subjects, as in his absence  
 would rather follow their own judgment than his  
 commands; and by demonstrating the misfor-  
 tunes which this disobedience draws upon them,  
 the evil consequences which almost infallibly at-  
 tend these particular notions, which are intirely  
 different from the general Idea of him who ought  
 to govern.

But as it was necessary that the Princes in the  
*Iliad* should be cholerick and quarrellsome, so it is  
 necessary in the Fable of the *Odyssey* that the chief  
 person should be sage and prudent. This raises  
 a difficulty in the Fiction; because this person  
 ought to be absent for the two reasons aforemen-  
 tioned, which are essential to the Fable, and  
 which constitute the principal aim of it: but he

cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance, *viz.* That a King should upon no account leave his Country.

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the Prudence of a Politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important enough of itself to supply matter for another Poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the first place, this Necessity, and the departure of the Hero must be disjoined from the Poem; and in the second place, the Hero having been obliged to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action and placed distinct from the Fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own Government. For at this rate, his Absence would be merely voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arise.

Thus in the constitution of the Fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his Poem, the Departure of a Prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place; but his Return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first Idea *Homer* gives us of it. <sup>b</sup> His hero appears at first in a desolate Island, sitting upon the side of the Sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the

<sup>b</sup> *Odysssey* v.

obstacle that had so long opposed his Return, and detained him from revisiting his own dear Country.

And lastly, since this forced delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make voyages by sea; *Homer* has judiciously made choice of a Prince whose Kingdom was in an Island.

Let us see then how he has feigned all this Action, making his Hero a person in years, because Years are requisite to instruct a man in Prudence and Policy.

“ A Prince had been obliged to forsake his  
 “ native Country, and to head an Army of his  
 “ Subjects in a foreign expedition. Having glo-  
 “ riously performed this enterprise, he was  
 “ marching home again, and conducting his  
 “ Subjects to his own State. But spite of all  
 “ the attempts, with which the eagerness to re-  
 “ turn had inspired him, he was stopt by the  
 “ way by tempests for several years, and cast up-  
 “ on several countries differing from each other  
 “ in Manners and Government. In these dan-  
 “ gers his Companions not always following his  
 “ orders, perished through their own fault.  
 “ The Grandees of his country strangely abuse his  
 “ absence, and raise no small disorders at home.  
 “ They consume his estate, conspire to destroy  
 “ his son, would constrain his Queen to accept  
 “ of one of them for her Husband; and indulge

“ themselves in all violence, so much the more,  
 “ because they were persuaded he would never  
 “ return. But at last he returns, and discover-  
 “ ing himself only to his son and some others,  
 “ who had continued firm to him, he is an eye-  
 “ witness of the insolence of his enemies, pu-  
 “ nishes them according to their deserts, and re-  
 “ stores to his Island that tranquillity and repose  
 “ to which they had been strangers during his  
 “ absence.”

As the Truth, which serves for foundation to  
 this fiction, is, that the Absence of a person  
 from his own home, or his neglect of his own  
 affairs, is the cause of great disorders : so the  
 principal point of the Action, and the most Es-  
 sential one, is the Absence of the Hero. This  
 fills almost all the Poem : for not only this real  
 absence lasted several years, but even when the  
 Hero returned, he does not discover himself ; and  
 this prudent disguise, from whence he reaped so  
 much advantage, has the same effect upon the Au-  
 thors of the disorders, and all others who knew  
 him not, as his real absence had before, so that  
 he is absent as to them, till the very moment of  
 their punishment.

After the Poet had thus composed his Fable,  
 and joined the Fiction to the Truth, he then  
 makes choice of *Ulysses* the King of the Isle of  
*Ithaca*, to maintain the character of his chief  
 Personage, and bestowed the rest upon *Telema-*



*chus*, *Penelope*, *Antinous*, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts and natural consequences of the fundamental Truth; and which the Poet very dextrously lays down in those fictions which are the Episodes and Members of the entire Action. Such for instance are these advices: not to intrude one's self into the Mysteries of Government, which the Prince keeps secret: this is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull-hide, which the miserable Companions of *Ulysses* would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer one's self to be led away by the seeming Charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the *Sirens Song* invited<sup>1</sup>. Not to suffer one's self to be sensualized by pleasures, like those who were changed into brutes by *Circe*: and a great many other points of Morality necessary for all sorts of people.

This Poem is more useful to the People than the *Iliad*, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their Princes, than through their own miscarriages. But in the *Odyssey*, it is not the fault of *Ulysses* that is the ruin of his Subjects. This wise Prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the Poet in the *Iliad* says;

<sup>1</sup> Improba Siren desidia. *Horat.*

xviii A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

“ He sings the anger of *Achilles*, which had  
 “ caused the death of so many *Grecians* ;” and  
 on the contrary, in the <sup>k</sup> *Odyssy* he tells his Readers,  
 “ That the Subjects perished through their  
 “ own fault.”

S E C T. IV.

<sup>1</sup> *ARISTOTLE* bestows great Encomiums upon *Homer* for the Simplicity of his design, because he has included in one single part all that happened at the siege of *Troy*. And to this he opposes the ignorance of some Poets who imagined that the Unity of the Fable or Action was sufficiently preserved by the Unity of the Hero ; and who composed their *Thebæids*, *Heracleids*, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one Poem every thing that happened to one Personage.

He finds fault with those Poets who were for reducing the Unity of the *Fable* into the Unity of the *Hero*, because one Man may have performed several adventures, which it is impossible to reduce under any one general and simple head. This reducing of all things to Unity and Simplicity is what *Horace* likewise makes his first Rule.

“ Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum.”

<sup>k</sup> Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο.

*Odyss.* i.

<sup>1</sup> *Of the Unity of the Fable.*

According to these Rules, it will be allowable to make use of several Fables; (or to speak more correctly) of several Incidents which may be divided into several Fables; provided they are so ordered, that the Unity of the Fable be not spoiled. This liberty is still greater in the Epick Poem, because it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and compleat.

I will explain myself more distinctly by the Practice of *Homer*.

No doubt but one might make four distinct Fables out of these four following instructions.

1. *Division between those of the same Party exposes them entirely to their enemies.*
2. *Conceal your Weakness, and you will be dreaded as much, as if you had none of those imperfections, of which they are ignorant.*
3. *When your strength is only feigned, and founded only in the Opinion of others; never venture so far as if your strength was real.*
4. *The more you agree together, the less hurt can your Enemies do you.*

It is plain, I say, that each of these particular Maxims might serve for the Ground-work of a Fiction, and one might make four distinct Fables out of them. May not one then put all these into one single *Epoëa*? Not unless one single Fable can be made out of all. The Poet indeed may

have so much skill as to unite all into one Body, as Members and Parts, each of which taken afunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, this Conjunction shall be no hindrance at all to the Unity and the regular Simplicity of the Fable. This is what *Homer* has done with such success in the composition of the *Iliad*.

1. *The Division between Achilles and his Allies tended to the ruin of their Designs.* 2. *Patroclus comes to their relief in the Armour of this Hero, and Hector retreats.* 3. *But this young Man pushing the Advantage which his disguise gave him, too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian Affairs in the same disorder, from which in that disguise he came to free them.* 4. *Achilles provoked at the Death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the death of Hector.* These various incidents being thus united, do not make different Actions and Fables, but are only the uncompleat and unfinished parts of one and the same Action and Fable, which alone when taken thus complexly, can be said to be compleat and entire: and all these Maxims of the Moral, are easily reduced into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are these, <sup>m</sup> That a right under-

<sup>m</sup> Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt: discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur. *Sallust. de bello Jug.*

standing is the preservation, and Discord the destruction of States.

Though then the Poet has made use of two parts in his Poems, each of which might have served for a Fable, as we have observed: yet this Multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular *Polymythia*, contrary to the necessary Unity and Simplicity of the Fable; but it gives the Fable another qualification, altogether necessary and regular, namely its Perfection and finishing stroke.

## S E C T. V.

THE Action of a Poem is the Subject which the Poet undertakes, proposes, and builds upon. So that the Moral and the Instructions which are the end of the Epick Poem are not the Matter of it. Those the Poets leave in their Allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the *Exordium*, that they sing some *Action*. *The Revenge of Achilles, the Return of Ulysses, &c.*

Since then the Action is the Matter of a Fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the Fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the Action, and are parts of the Epick Matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for Instance, are the contention of *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*, the slaughter *Hector* makes

<sup>a</sup> *Of the Action of the Epick Poem.*

xxii A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

in the *Grecian* Army, the Re-union of the *Greek* Princes; and lastly, the Re-settlement and Victory which was the consequence of that Re-union.

There are four qualifications in the Epick Action: the first is its *Unity*, the second its *Integrity*, the third its *Importance*, the fourth its *Duration*.

The Unity of the Epick Action, as well as the Unity of the Fable, does not consist either in the Unity of the Hero, or in the Unity of Time: three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no Episode but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the Action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these Episodes and these Members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any Episode so as it may seem to be an entire Action; but to let each Episode still appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itself not compleat.

° *Aristotle* not only says that the Epick Action should be One, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect and compleat, and for this purpose ought to have a *Beginning*, a *Middle*, and an *End*. These three parts of a whole are too generally and universally denoted by the words, Beginning, Middle, and End; we may interpret them more precisely, and say, That the Causes

° *Of the Beginning, Middle, and End of the Action.*

and Designs of an Action are the Beginning : that the Effects of these Causes, and the Difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the Middle; and that the Unraveling and Resolution of these difficulties are the End.

<sup>p</sup> *Homer's* design in the *Iliad* is to relate the Anger and Revenge of *Achilles*. The Beginning of this Action is the Change of *Achilles* from a calm to a passionate temper. The Middle is the Effects of his Passion, and all the illustrious Deaths it is the Cause of. The end of this same Action is the Return of *Achilles* to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the *Grecian* Camp, when *Agamemnon* their General provokes *Apollo* against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of *Achilles*, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact Beginning : it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the Effects of this Anger. *Achilles* revenges himself, and that is an exact Middle ; it supposes before it the Anger of *Achilles*, this Revenge is the Effect of it. Then this Middle requires after it the Effects of this Revenge, which is the Satisfaction of *Achilles* : for the Revenge had not been compleat, unless *Achilles* had been satisfied. By this means the Poet makes his Hero, after he was glutted by the Mischief he had done to *Aga-*

<sup>p</sup> *The Action of the Iliad.*

# xxiv A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

*memnon*, by the death of *Heſtor*, and the honour he did his friend, by insulting over his Murderer; he makes him, I ſay, to be moved by the Tears and Misfortunes of King *Priam*. We ſee him as calm at the End of the Poem, during the funeral of *Heſtor*, as he was at the Beginning of the Poem, whilſt the Plague raged among the *Grecians*. This End is juſt, ſince the Calmneſs of temper *Achilles* re-enjoyed, is only an Effect of the Revenge which ought to have preceded : and after this nobody expects any more of his Anger. Thus has *Homer* been very exact in the Beginning, Middle and End of the Action he made choice of for the ſubject of his *Iliad*.

<sup>a</sup> His Deſign in the *Odyſſey* was to deſcribe the Return of *Ulyſſes* from the Siege of *Troy*, and his Arrival at *Ithaca*. He opens this Poem with the complaints of *Minerva* againſt *Neptune*, who opposed the Return of this Hero, and againſt *Calypſo* who detained him in an Iſland from *Ithaca*. Is this a Beginning ? No ; doubtleſs, the Reader would know why *Neptune* is diſpleaſed with *Ulyſſes*, and how this Prince came to be with *Calypſo* ? He would know how he came from *Troy* thither ? The Poet answers his Demands out of the Mouth of *Ulyſſes* himſelf, who relates theſe things, and begins the Action, by the Recital of his Travels from the City of *Troy*. It ſignifies little whether the Beginning of the Action be the Beginning

<sup>a</sup> *The Action of the Odyſſey.*



of the Poem. The Beginning of this Action is that which happens to *Ulysses*, when upon his leaving *Troy* he bends his Course for *Ithaca*. The Middle comprehends all the Misfortunes he endured, and all the Disorders of his own Government. The End is the re-instating of the Hero in the peaceable possession of his Kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his Son, his Wife, his Father, and several others. The Poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he gone no farther than the death of these Princes, who were the Rivals and enemies of *Ulysses*, because the Reader might have looked for some Revenge which the Subjects of these Princes might have taken, on him who had killed their Sovereigns: but this Danger over, and the People vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The Poem and the Action have all their Parts, and no more.

But the Order of the *Odyssy* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the *Poem* does not begin with the Beginning of the *Action*.

The *Causes of the Action* are also what the Poet is obliged to give an Account of. There are three sorts of Causes, the Humours, the Interests, and the Designs of Men; and these different Causes of an Action are likewise often the Causes of one another, every Man taking up those Interests in which his Humour engages him,

*Of the Causes and Beginning of the Action.*

and forming those Designs to which his Humour and Interest incline him. Of all these the Poet ought to inform his Readers, and render them conspicuous in his principal Personages.

*Homer* has ingeniously begun his *Odyssëy* with the Transactions at *Ithaca*, during the absence of *Ulysses*. If he had begun with the Travels of his Hero, he would scarce have spoken of any one else, and a man might have read a great deal of the Poem, without conceiving the least Idea of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, or her Suitors, who had so great a share in the Action; but in the Beginning he has pitched upon, besides these Personages whom he discovers, he represents *Ulysses* in his full Length, and from the very first opening one sees the Interest which the Gods take in the Action.

The Skill and Care of the same Poet may be seen likewise in inducing his Personages in the first Book of his *Iliad*, where he discovers the Humours, the Interests, and the Designs of *Agamemnon*, *Achilles*, *Hector*, *Ulysses*, and several others, and even of the Deities. And in his Second he makes a Review of the *Grecian* and *Trojan* Armies, which is full Evidence, that all we have here said is very necessary.

\* As these *Causës* are the *Beginning* of the Action, the opposite Designs against that of the

\* *Of the Middle or Intrigue of the Action.*

Hero are the *Middle* of it, and form that Difficulty or *Intrigue*, which makes up the greatest part of the Poem; the Solution or *Unravelling* commences when the Reader begins to see that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. *Homer* has divided each of his Poems into two Parts, and has put a particular *Intrigue*, and the Solution of it into each Part.

The first Part of the *Iliad* is the Anger of *Achilles*, who is for revenging himself upon *Agamemnon* by the means of *Hector* and the *Trojans*. The *Intrigue* comprehends the three days Fight which happened in the Absence of *Achilles*: and it consists on one side in the resistance of *Agamemnon* and the *Grecians*: and on the other in the revengeful and inexorable Humour of *Achilles*, which would not suffer him to be reconciled. The Loss of the *Grecians*, and the Despair of *Agamemnon*, prepare for a Solution by the satisfaction which the incensed Hero received from it. The death of *Patroclus* join'd to the Offers of *Agamemnon*, which of itself had proved ineffectual, remove this Difficulty, and make the *Unravelling* of the first part.

This death is likewise the Beginning of the second Part; since it puts *Achilles* upon the design of revenging himself on *Hector*. But the design of *Hector* is opposite to that of *Achilles*: this *Trojan* is valiant and resolved to stand on his own Defence. This Valour and Resolution

of *Hector*, are on his part the cause of the Intrigue. All the Endeavours *Achilles* used to meet with *Hector* and be the death of him; and the contrary Endeavours of the *Trojan* to keep out of his reach, and defend himself, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the last day. The Unravelling begins at the death of *Hector*; and besides that, it contains the insulting of *Achilles* over his Body, the Honours he paid to *Patroclus*, and the Intreaties of King *Priam*. The regrets of this King and the other *Trojans*, in the sorrowful Obsequies they paid to *Hector's* body, end the Unravelling; they justify the satisfaction of *Achilles*, and demonstrate his Tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odysssey* is the Return of *Ulysses* into *Ithaca*. *Neptune* opposes it by raising tempests, and this makes the Intrigue. The Unravelling is the arrival of *Ulysses* upon his own Island, where *Neptune* could offer him no farther injury. The second part is the re-instating this Hero in his own Government. The Princes that are his Rivals, oppose him, and this is a fresh Intrigue: the Solution of it begins at their deaths, and is compleated as soon as the *Ithacans* were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odysssey* have not one common Intrigue. The Anger of *Achilles* forms both the Intrigues in the *Iliad*; and it is so far the Matter of this *Epopœa*, that the very Begin-

ning and End of this Poem depend on the Beginning and End of this Anger. But let the Desire *Achilles* had to revenge himself, and the Desire *Ulysses* had to return to his own Country be never so near allied, yet we cannot place them under one and the same Notion: for that Desire of *Ulysses* is not a Passion that begins and ends in the Poem with the Action: it is a natural Habit: nor does the Poet propose it for his Subject as he does the Anger of *Achilles*.

We have already observed what is meant by the *Intrigue*, and the *Unravelling* thereof; let us now say something of the Manner of forming both. These two should arise naturally out of the very Essence and Subject of the Poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their Conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their Action had presented them with whatever they inserted, without putting themselves to the Trouble of a farther Inquiry.

What is more usual and natural to Warriours, than Anger, Heat, Passion, and Impatience of bearing the least Affront or Disrespect? This is what forms the Intrigue of the *Iliad*; and every thing we read there is nothing else but the Effect of this Humour and these Passions.

What more natural and usual Obstacle to those who take Voyages, than the Sea, the Winds, and the Storms? *Homer* makes this the Intrigue of the first part of the *Odysssey*: and for the second, he

makes use of almost the infallible effect of the long Absence of a Master, whose return is quite despaired of, *viz.* the Insolence of his Servants and Neighbours, the Danger of his Son and Wife, and the Sequestration of his Estate. Besides, an Absence of almost twenty Years, and the insupportable Fatigues joined to the Age of which *Ulysses* then was, might induce him to believe that he should not be owned by those who thought him dead, and whose Interest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had called himself *Ulysses*, they would easily have destroyed him as an Impostor, before he had an Opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious Disguise, to which the Advantages his Enemies had taken of his Absence had reduced him, and to which his long Misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best Measures he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him, by the very Nature of his Action, to execute his Designs, and overcome the Obstacles it cast before him. And it is this contest between the Prudence and the Dissimulation of a single Man on one hand, and the ungovernable Insolence of so many Rivals on the other, which

and of the *ILIAD* and *ODYSSEY*. xxxi  
constitutes the Intrigue of the second Part of the  
*Odyſſey*.

‘ If the *Plot* or *Intrigue* muſt be natural, and ſuch as ſprings from the very Subject, as has been already urged; then the *Winding-up* of the Plot, by a more ſure claim, muſt have this Qualification, and be a probable conſequence of all that went before. As this is what the Readers regard more than the reſt, ſo ſhould the Poet be more exact in it. This is the End of the Poem, and the laſt Impreſſion that is to be ſtamped upon them.

We ſhall find this in the *Odyſſey*. *Ulyſſes* by a Tempeſt is caſt upon the Iſland of the *Phæacians*, to whom he diſcovers himſelf, and deſires they would favour his Return to his own Country which was not very far diſtant. One cannot ſee any reaſon why the King of this Iſland ſhould reſuſe ſuch a reaſonable Requeſt, to a Hero whom he ſeemed to have in great Eſteem. The *Phæacians* indeed had heard him tell the Story of his Adventures; and in this fabulous recital conſiſted all the advantage that he could derive from his Preſence; for the Art of War which they admired in him, his Undauntedneſs under Dangers, his indefatigable Patience, and other Virtues, were ſuch as theſe Iſlanders were not uſed to. All their Talent lay in Singing and Dancing, and whatſoever was charming in a quiet Life.

‘ *Of the End or Unravelling of the Action.*

And here we see how dextrously *Homer* prepares the Incidents he makes use of. These People could do no less, for the Account with which *Ulysses* had so much entertained them, than afford him a Ship and a safe Convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long Absence, and the Travels which had disfigured him; made him altogether unknown; and the Danger he would have incurred, had he discovered himself too soon, forced him to a Disguise: lastly, This Disguise gave him an opportunity of surprising those young Suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these Examples that *Aristotle* drew this Rule, that “ Whatever concludes the Poem “ should so spring from the very Constitution of “ the Fable, as if it were a *necessary*, or at least “ a *probable* consequence.”

## S E C T. VI.

“ THE *Time* of the Epick Action is not fixed, like that of the Dramatick Poem: it is much longer; for an uninterrupted Duration is much more necessary in an Action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides Tragedy is fuller

“ *The Time of the Action.*



and of the *ILIAD* and *ODYSSEY*. xxxiii  
of Passion, and consequently of such a Violence  
as cannot admit of so long a Duration.

The *Iliad* containing an Action of *Anger* and  
*Violence*, the Poet allows it but a short time, a-  
bout *forty Days*. The Design of the *Odyssey* re-  
quired another Conduct; the Character of the  
Hero is *Prudence* and *Long-suffering*; therefore  
the Time of its Duration is much longer, above  
*eight Years*.

\* The *Passions* of Tragedy are different from  
those of the Epick Poem. In the former, *Ter-  
rour* and *Pity* have the chief place; the Passion  
that seems most peculiar to Epick Poetry, is  
*Admiration*.

Besides this *Admiration*, which in general dis-  
tinguishes the Epick Poem from the Dramatick;  
each Epick Poem has likewise some peculiar *Pas-  
sion*, which distinguishes it in particular from  
other Epick Poems, and constitutes a kind of  
singular and individual difference between these  
Poems of the same Species. These singular Pas-  
sions correspond to the *Character* of the *Hero*.  
*Anger* and *Terrour* reign throughout the *Iliad*,  
because *Achilles* is angry, and the most Terrible  
of all Men. The *Æneid* has all the *soft* and *ten-  
der Passions*, because that is the Character of *Æ-  
neas*. The *Prudence*, *Wisdom* and *Constancy*  
of *Ulysses* do not allow him either of these Ex-  
tremes, therefore the Poet does not permit one

\* *The Passions of the Epick Poem.*

of them to be predominant in the *Odyſſey*. He confines himſelf to *Admiration* only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the *Iliad*: and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more Machines, in the *Odyſſey*, into the Body of the Action, than are to be ſeen in the Actions of the other two Poems.

\* The *Manners* of the Epick Poem ought to be *poetically good*, but it is not neceſſary they be always *morally ſo*. They are poetically good, when one may diſcover the Virtue or Vice, the good or ill Inclinations, of every one who ſpeaks or acts: they are poetically bad, when Perſons are made to ſpeak or act out of Character, or inconſiſtently or unequally. The *Manners* of *Æneas* and of *Mezentius* are equally good, conſidered poetically, becauſe they equally demonſtrate the Piety of the one, and the Impiety of the other.

† It is requiſite to make the ſame diſtinction between a Hero in Morality, and a Hero in Poetry, as between moral and poetical Goodneſs. *Achilles* had as much right to the latter as *Æneas*. *Ariſtotle* ſays, that the Hero of a Poem ſhould be neither good nor bad; neither advanced above the reſt of mankind by his Virtues, or ſunk beneath them by his Vices; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

\* *The Manners.*

† *Character of the Hero.*

The other Qualifications of the *Manners* are, that they be *suitable* to the Causes which either raise or discover them in the Persons; that they have an exact *Resemblance* to what History, or Fable, have delivered of those Persons, to whom they are ascribed; and that there be an *Equality* in them, so that no man is made to act, or speak, out of his character.

<sup>z</sup> But this Equality is not sufficient for the *Unity of the Character*; it is further necessary, that the same Spirit appear in all sort of Encounters. Thus *Æneas* acting with great *Piety* and *Mildness* in the first part of the *Æneid*, which requires no other Character; and afterwards appearing illustrious in heroick valour, in the wars of the second part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition; would, doubtless, be far from offending against the *Equality* of the Manners: but yet there would be no *Simplicity* or *Unity* in the Character. So that, besides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest; and without this, we may affirm, it is no Character.

One may indeed make a Hero as valiant as *Achilles*, as pious as *Æneas*, and as prudent as *Ulysses*. But it is a meer Chimæra to imagine a Hero that has the Valour of *Achilles*, the Piety of

<sup>z</sup> *Unity of the Character.*

xxxvi A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

*Æneas*, and the Prudence of *Ulysses*, at one and the same time. This Vision might happen to an Author, who would suit the character of a Hero to whatever each part of the Action might naturally require, without regarding the Essence of the Fable, or the Unity of the Character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: this Hero would be the mildest, best-natured Prince in the World; and also the most cholerick, hard-hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like *Æneas*, extremely violent like *Achilles*, and yet have the indifference of *Ulysses*, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the Poet to call this Person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several Poems, whose Authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a Hero is that of an accomplished man. They would be all alike; all valiant in Battle, prudent in Council, pious in the Acts of Religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and, lastly, endued with all the prodigious Virtues, any Poet could invent. All this would be independent of the Action and the Subject of the Poem; and, upon seeing each Hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess, to what Action, and to what Poem, the Hero belonged. So that we should see, that none of those would have a

Character; since the Character is that, which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding Quality in *Achilles*, is his Anger, in *Ulysses* the art of Dissimulation, in *Æneas* Meekness. Each of these may be stiled, by way of eminence, the Character in these Heroes.

But these Characters cannot be alone. It is absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable: either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining Qualities; as the Poet has done the Anger of *Achilles*, by shading it with extraordinary Valour; or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid Virtue, as is to be observed in the two others. The Dissimulation of *Ulysses* is a part of his Prudence; and the Meekness of *Æneas* is wholly employed in submitting his will to the Gods. For the making up this Union, our Poets have joined together such Qualities as are by nature the most compatible; *Valour* with *Anger*, *Meekness* with *Piety*, and *Prudence* with *Dissimulation*. This last Union was necessary for the *Goodness* of *Ulysses*; for without that, his Dissimulation might have degenerated into Wickedness and Double-dealing.

## S E C T. VII.

WE come now to the *Machines* of the Epick Poem. The chief Passion which it aims to excite being *Admiration*, nothing is so conducive to that as the *Marvellous*; and the importance and dignity of the Action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the *Care and Interposition of Heaven*.

The Machines are of three sorts. Some are *Theological*, and were invented to explain the nature of the Gods. Others are *Physical*, and represent the things of Nature. The last are *Moral*, and are the Images of Virtues and Vices.

*Homer* and the Antients have given to their Deities the Manners, Passions, and Vices of Men. Their Poems are wholly Allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend *Homer*, than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many Gods, for his bestowing Passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The Scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

If it be allowable to speak thus of the Gods in *Theology*, much more in the Fictions of *Natural Philosophy*, where, if a Poet describes the Deities, he must give them such Manners, Speeches, and Actions, as are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those Divinities. The

\* *Of the Machinery.*

case is the same in the *Morals* of the Deities: *Minerva* is wise because she represents Prudence; *Venus* is both good or bad, because the Passion of Love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the Gods of a Poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our Passions we make so many allegorical Deities; we may attribute to the Gods all that is done in the Poem, whether good or evil. But these Deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by meer Inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we say every day, "That some God has assisted us, or "some Dæmon has instigated us."

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and præternatural.

The third way has something of both the others; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted: this includes Dreams, Oracles, &c.

All these ways must be *Probable*; for however necessary the Marvellous is to the Epick Action, as nothing is so conducive to Admiration; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impossible. Though the Probability of these Machines be of a very large extent, (since it is founded upon Divine Power) it is not with-

# xl A VIEW of the EPICK POEM,

out limitations. There are numerous Instances of allowable and probable Machines in the Epick Poem, where the Gods are no less Actors than the Men. But the less credible sort, such as *Metamorphoses*, &c. are far more rare.

This suggests a Reflection on the Method of rendering those Machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those, which require only *Divine Probability*, should be so disengaged from the Action, that one might subtract them from it, without destroying the Action. But those, which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon *Human Probability*, and not on the sole Power of God. Thus the Episodes of *Circe*, the *Syrens*, *Polyphemus*, &c. are necessary to the Action of the *Odyssey*, and yet not humanly probable: yet *Homer* has artificially reduced them to human Probability, by the Simplicity and Ignorance of the *Phæacians*, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The next Question is, Where, and on what occasions Machines may be used? It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any Action to be performed without them. *Petronius* makes this a Precept: *Per ambages, deorumque ministeria*, &c. The Gods are mentioned in the very Proposition of their Works, the *Invocation* is address'd to them, and the whole *Narration* is full of them. The Gods are the *Causes* of the Action, they form the



*Intrigue*, and bring about the *Solution*. The precept of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, that the Unravelling of the Plot should not proceed from a Miracle, or the appearance of a God, has place only in Dramatick Poetry, not in the Epick. For it is plain, that both in the Solution of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the Gods are concerned: in the former, the Deities meet to appease the anger of *Achilles*: *Iris* and *Mercury* are sent to that purpose, and *Minerva* eminently assists *Achilles* in the decisive combat with *Heſtor*. In the *Odyssey*, the ſame Goddeſs fights cloſe by *Ulyſſes* againſt the Suitors, and concludes that Peace betwixt him and the *Ithaceniſians*, which compleats the Poem.

We may therefore determine, that a Machine is not an Invention to extricate the Poet out of any difficulty which embarraſſes him: but that the Preſence of a Divinity, and ſome Action ſurpriſing and extraordinary, are inſerted into almoſt all the parts of his work, in order to render it more Maſteſtick and more Admirable. But this mixture ought to be ſo made, that the Machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the Action: at the ſame time that it gives the Readers a leſſon of Piety and Virtue; and teaches them, that the moſt brave and the moſt wiſe can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the aſſiſtance of Heaven. Thus the Machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, *Marvellous, Probable, and Moral.*





THE  
FIRST BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.



## THE ARGUMENT,

### *Minerva's Descent to Ithaca.*

**T**HE Poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the Gods assembled in council proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis King of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his Father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.



THE  
FIRST BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.

THE Man, for Wisdom's various arts re-  
nown'd,

Long exercis'd in woes, oh Muse! refund.

Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall  
Of sacred *Troy*, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,

NOTES.

We shall proceed in the same method through the course of these Annotations upon the *Odyssey*, as those in the *Iliad*; considering *Homer* chiefly as a Poet, endeavouring to make his beauties *understood*, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think *Homer* has

# 4 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book 1.

Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd,  
Their Manners noted, and their States survey'd. 6

no human defects; and on the other to dwell so much upon those defects, as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of Criticks form a general character, from the observation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust, as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the Reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allowed, if it be less noble, it is more instructive: the other abounds with more Heroism, this with more Morality. The *Iliad* gives us a draught of Gods and Heroes, of discord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter; the *Odyssey* sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature; the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of antient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The *Iliad* concludes with the ruin, the *Odyssey* with the happiness of a nation. *Horace* was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to *Lollius*.

“ Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, & ira,

“ *Iliacos* intra muros peccatur & extra.

“ Rursus, quid virtus & quid sapientia possit,

“ Utile proposuit nobis exemplar *Ulysseni*.”

§. 1. *The Man for Wisdom, &c.*] *Homer* opens this Poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

“ Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

“ Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.”

*Cicero* lays this down as a rule for the Orator, *Principia verecunda, non elatis intensa verbis*; and *Horace* for the Poet, *Nec sic incipies, &c.* He proposes the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,  
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore :

pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his *Art of Poetry*.

“ Dic mihi, Musa, virum, captæ post tempora *Trojæ*,

“ Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes.”

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation : the *sufferings* of *Ulysses* are the subject of the whole *Odyssey*, and yet *Horace* has omitted the mention of those sufferings : ὅς μάλ᾽ ἀπολλὰ πλάγχθη. There is another word also which seems essential, that is, πολέτρωτοι, this is likewise omitted. For the sufferings of *Ulysses*, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the Poem. But indeed in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances.

“ Qui domitor *Trojæ*, multorum *providus* urbes

“ Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per æquor

“ Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa

“ Pertulit” ————— *Epist. ad Loll.*

I must also refute a criticism of *Rapin*, who will have it that the word πολέτρωτοι includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit. But *Eustathius* admirably vindicates the Poet in this respect ; he shews us that τέρετος no where in *Homer* signifies (πῶς) or Morals ; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition of life ; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it ; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that through experience has learned wisdom. I have likewise the authority of *Horace* for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

“ Qui domitor *Trojæ*, multorum *providus* urbes.”

I take *providus* in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself

Vain toils ! their impious folly dar'd to prey

On Herds devoted to the God of Day ; 10

from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what *Rapin* objects against *Ulysses*, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost : *Homer* himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they through their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of *Homer*, says *Eustathius*, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says *Rapin*, what could oblige *Homer* to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his Hero in the very frontispiece of his Poem ? and invoke his Muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffered his companions to be destroyed ? There had been some weight in this objection, if *Ulysses* had saved his own, with the loss of their lives ; but I cannot see any dishonour in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroyed themselves by folly : it was chiefly by storms that they perished ; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest : he did all that a wise man could do, he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as *Ulysses*.

§. 1. *For Wisdom's various arts renown'd.*] *Bossu's* observations in relation to this Epithet *πολύτροπος*, given to *Ulysses*, is worth transcribing. The Fable of the *Odyssey* (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a State : therefore the quality it requires is *Wisdom* ; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise character requires ; it is therefore requisite it should be limited. The great art of Kings is the mystery of *Diffimulation*. It is well known, that *Lewis* the Eleventh, for the instruction of his son, reduced all the *Latin* language to these words only, viz. *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. It was likewise by this practice that *Saul* began his reign, when he was first elected, and as yet full of the Spirit of God. The first thing we read



The God vindictive doom'd them never more  
(Ah men unblest'd !) to touch that natal shore.

of him in holy writ is, \* that he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

This then is the *character* which the *Greek* Poet gives his *Ulysses* in the Proposition of his Poem, he calls him ἀνδρα πολέ-  
τηρον; to denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without any thing having been mentioned of *Circe*, who detained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformations she made of all sorts of persons; the reader finds him at first with *Calypso* the daughter of wise *Atlas*, who bore up the vast pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable Ocean: that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in Heaven, Earth or Sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's self; this wise man called his daughter by a name that signified a † *secret*. The Poet makes his Hero, whom he designed for a Politician, to stay seven whole years with this Nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice: for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from *Ogygia* he is cast upon the Isle of *Phæacia*: as kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the night before he went off, e'er he would discover himself. From thence he goes to *Ithaca*: the first adventure that happened to him there was with *Minerva*, the most prudent among the Deities, as *Ulysses* was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves. *Minerva* takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and *Ulysses* tells her he was obliged to fly from *Crete*, because he had murdered the son of King *Idomeneus*. The Goddess discovers herself first, and commends him particularly, because

\* Ille vero dissimulabat se audire. Reg. lib. i.

† Καλύπτειν.

Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,  
Celestial Muse! and to our world relate.

these artifices were so easy and natural to him, that they seemed to be born with him. Afterwards the Hero under the form of a beggar deceives first of all *Eumeus*, then his son, and last of all his wife and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his Enemies, to whom he discovered not himself till he killed them, namely on the last night. After his discovering himself in the Palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrowed name; before he would give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the Poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures.

§. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall  
Of sacred Troy ———]*

Whence is it that *Ulysses* is said to have overthrown *Troy*? and not *Achilles*, who was of more remarkable courage than *Ulysses*? *Eustathius* tells us, that the destruction of *Troy* ought to be ascribed chiefly to *Ulysses*, as he not only took away the *Palladium*, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquered. *Virgil* in his second book of the *Æneis* gives us a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that *Ulysses* was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

§. 9. *Vain toils! their impious folly, &c.]* By this single trait, *Homer* marks an essential difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; namely, that in the former Poem the people perished by the folly of their Kings:

“*Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*”

In this, the people perish by their own folly, while their Prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reason why the *Odyssey* is more calculated for the people, than the *Iliad*. *Dacier*.

Now at their native realms the *Greeks* arriv'd ;  
 All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd, 16

†. 13. *Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate.*] It may be asked why the Poet invokes the Muse to recount only part of the sufferings of *Ulysses*? and why those words, *To Us also*, are inserted? To the first it may be answered, that an heroick Poem dwells chiefly upon incidents of importance, and passes over every thing that does not contribute to raise our idea of the Hero, or the main design of the Poem. To the other *Eustathius* answers several ways: either, says he, the word *καί* is to be taken as an expletive, as it is in a thousand places in *Homer*; or it means that this is a subject so considerable, that it will be a theme to many poets: or that being a true History it had spread over many nations of the world, and that *Homer* himself received the story of the Poem from *Ægypt*; and then the meaning will be, “ Sing, oh “ Muse, to the *Greeks* as well as to other nations, the suffer- “ ings of *Ulysses*.” I should prefer the first as being the most natural: the rest seem forced, and consequently improper for the opening of a Poem, where the utmost plainness is necessary; especially, if we consider that *Ulysses* was a *Grecian*, and it is not probable that the *Grecians* should be the least acquainted with the story, or the latest to celebrate the actions, of a *Grecian*.

†. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is necessary for the better understanding of the Poem, to fix the period of Time from which it takes its beginning: *Homer*, as *Eustathius* observes, does not begin with the wanderings of *Ulysses*; he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his *Iliad*, he dates his Poem from the anger of *Achilles*, which happened almost at the conclusion of the *Trojan* war. From hence *Horace* drew his observation in his *Artis Poet.*

“ Semper ad eventum festinat; & in medias res

“ Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.”

And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy Main.  
*Ulysses*, sole of all the victor train,  
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,  
 Deplor'd his absent Queen, and Empire lost. 20  
*Calypso* in her caves constrain'd his stay,  
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :  
 In vain — for now the circling years disclose  
 The day predestin'd to reward his woes.

There are but forty-eight days from the departure of *Ulysses* from *Calypso*, to his discovery in *Ithaca* ; he had been one year with *Circe*, and seven with *Calypso*, when the Gods dispatched *Mercury* to that Goddess ; from which point of time we are to date the *Odyssey*.

This observation gives a reason why the Poet invokes the Muse to recount the wanderings of this Hero in part only ; for *Ulysses*, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of *Troy*, was driven to *Ismarus* of the *Ciconians*. An Historian must have begun from the fall of *Troy*, and related his wanderings with truth and order ; for History is chiefly for instruction : but a Poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily ; he chuses or rejects, as suits best with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

\*. 21. *Calypso* in her caves constrain'd his stay.] To the Remark before cited of *Bossu*, upon the abode of *Ulysses* with *Calypso*, may be added this of the Abbé *Fraguier* : that his residing seven years in the caves of *Calypso* (the Goddess of Secrecy) may only mean that he remained so long hid from the knowledge and inquiry of all men ; or that whatever befel him in all that time, was lost to History, or made no part in the Poem.

At length his *Ithaca* is giv'n by Fate, 25  
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait;  
 At length their rage the hostile Pow'rs restrain,  
 All but the ruthless Monarch of the Main.  
 But now the God, remote, a heav'nly guest,  
 In *Æthiopia* grac'd the genial feast, 30

ψ. 28. *All but the ruthless Monarch of the Main.*] It may be asked why *Neptune* is thus enraged against *Ulysses*? *Homer* himself tells us, because that *Hero* had put out the Eye of his son *Cyclops*. But if we take *Neptune* by way of Allegory for the Ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of *Ulysses* were chiefly by sea; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the God of it as his greatest enemy. *Eustathius*.

ψ. 30. *In Æthiopia, &c.*] *Strabo* in his first book delivers his opinion, that “the ancient *Grecians* included all those people who lived upon the southern Ocean, from east to west, in the general name of *Æthiopians*, and that it was not confined to those only who lay south of *Ægypt*.” *Ptolemy* says, “that under the *Zodiack*, from east to west, inhabit the *Æthiopians*, black of colour.” And elsewhere the same Geographer divides *Æthiopia* into the eastern and the western. These eastern and western *Æthiopians* were separated by the *Arabian* or *Ægyptian* Gulf; which though never mentioned by *Homer*, as *Aristarchus* remarked, yet it is not probable (says *Strabo*) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a thousand stadia distant from the *Mediterranean*, when he knew the *Ægyptian Thebes*, which was four times as far off. *Strab. Plin. Spondan.*

I will not repeat what was observed upon the Gods being gone to the *Æthiopians*, in the first book of the *Iliad*; it is sufficient in general to observe, that the *Æthiopians* were a people very religious towards the Gods, and that they held a

(A race divided, whom with sloping rays  
 The rising and descending Sun surveys)  
 There on the world's extreamest verge, rever'd  
 With Hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,  
 Distant he lay: while in the bright abodes 35  
 Of high *Olympus*, *Jove* conven'd the Gods:  
 Th' assembly thus the Sire supreme address'd,  
*Ægyſthus*' fate revolving in his breast,  
 Whom young *Orestes* to the dreary coast  
 Of *Pluto* sent, a blood-polluted Ghost. 40

Perverſe Mankind! whoſe Wills, created  
 free,

Charge all their woes on abſolute Decree;

pompous feaſt twelve days annually to their honour; and in particular, that the Poet very judiciously makes uſe of this ſolemnity to remove *Neptune* out of the way, who was the enemy of *Ulyſſes*, that he may with the greater ſecurity bring off his Hero from *Calypſo*'s Iſland. *Euſtathius*.

¶. 41. *Jupiter's ſpeech.*] The ſolemnity and ſententiouſneſs of this ſpeech is taken notice of by *Euſtathius*; and ſurely Poetry muſt be highly valuable, when it delivers ſuch excellent inſtructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients; and made Philoſophy more agreeable. This paſſage is an inſtance of it, a paſſage worthy of a Chriſtian; it ſhews us that the Supreme Being is ſovereignly good; that he rewards the juſt, and puniſhes the unjuſt; and that the folly of man, and not the Decree of Heaven, is the cauſe of human calamity.

All to the dooming Gods their guilt translate,  
And Follies are miscall'd the Crimes of Fate.

When to his lust *Ægyſthus* gave the rein, 45  
Did Fate, or We, th' adult'rous act constrain?

¶ 45. *Ægyſthus*.] It is difficult to find a reason why, in the original, *Jupiter* should give such an honourable appellation to *Ægyſthus*, as *ἀνίμωτος*, *unblameable*, who had dishonoured the bed of *Agamemnon*, and taken his life away; especially in that very instant when he condemns the Fact with so great solemnity: *Eustathius* says, that *Homer*, an enemy to censure and invective, introduces that God as having respect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character; and adds that it had been an indecency in the Poet to have given countenance to that base custom by the authority of *Jupiter*. *Dacier* is not satisfied with this reason, and tells us that *Homer* gives *Ægyſthus* this title, to vindicate *Jupiter* from the imputation of his crimes: he gives us to understand that Heaven is not the cause of man's failings; that he is by Creation able to act virtuously, and that it is through his own misconduct that he deviates into evil; and therefore the meaning is this; "*Jupiter* calling to mind *Ægyſthus*, that *Ægyſthus* "whom he had created wise and virtuous, and made capable "to sustain that character." And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of *Jupiter*, who there vindicates his own Divinity.

But if this should seem too refined, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which *Ægyſthus* might have deserved for many good qualities: thus *Achilles* is called the *swift of foot*, even when he stands, or sleeps; the first being his general character. It may be further confirmed by a passage something resembling it in the holy Scriptures: the *Ægyptian* midwives were guilty of a lye to *Pharaoh*, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them; he blesses them not because they lyed, but because they preserved the children of the *Israelites*.

Did Fate, or We, when great *Atrides* dy'd,  
 Urge the bold traitor to the Regicide ?  
*Hermes* I sent, while yet his soul remain'd . .  
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd ; 50

†. 49. *Hermes I sent*, &c.] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the *Odyssey*, the whole of it being but one lesson of Morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the Reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a Deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of *Moses*.

*Jupiter* here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent *Mercury* for this purpose to *Ægythus*. It may be asked what is this *Mercury* whom *Jupiter* sends? It is the light of Nature, which Heaven implants in the breast of every man: and which, as *Cicero* says, is not only more ancient than the world, but co-eval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect: *There was from the beginning such a thing as Reason, a direct emanation from Nature itself, which prompted to good, and averted from evil. A Reason which did not then become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so even from the moment it existed, and it existed from ever, of an equal date with the divine Intelligence: it is the true and primordial Law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the Reason of the great Jupiter.*

That Reason of the supreme Being, is here called *Mercury*; that Reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, *this is good, or this is evil*. Hence arose an ancient Proverb, recorded by *Simplicius*, *Reason is a Mercury to all men*. *Epictetus* [lib. iii. *Arrian*.] says, *Apollo knew that Laius would not obey his Oracle. Apollo nevertheless did not neglect to prophesy to Laius those evils that threatened him. The goodness of the Divinity never fails to advertise mankind; that source of truth is ever open and free: but men are ever incredulous, disobedient, and rebellious.* *Dacier*.



To warn the wretch, that young *Orestes*, grown  
 To manly years, should re-assert the throne.  
 Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,  
 He plung'd into the gulf which Heav'n fore-  
 told.

Here paus'd the God ; and pensive thus replies  
*Minerva*, graceful with her azure eyes. 56  
 O thou ! from whom the whole creation  
 springs,  
 The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to Kings !  
 His death was equal to the direful deed ;  
 So may the Man of blood be doom'd to bleed ! 60  
 But grief and rage alternate wound my breast  
 For brave *Ulysses*, still by Fate oppress'd.

ψ. 57. *Minerva's speech.*] It may be asked what relation *Ulysses* has to *Ægyſthus*, that the mention of the one should immediately give occasion for the remembrance of the other ? And it may appear unnatural in the Poet to give rise to his Poem by so unexpected a transition from *Ægyſthus* to *Ulysses*. *Eustathius* vindicates *Homer*, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers itself to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when *Jupiter* is relating how he punishes the wicked, than for Wisdom or *Minerva* to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded ? There is no forced introduction, no artful preparation ; but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty. *Eustathius*.

Amidst an Isle, around whose rocky shore  
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,  
 The blameless hero from his wish'd for home 65  
 A Goddess guards in her enchanted dome.  
 (*Atlas* her fire, to whose far-piercing eye  
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;

†. 63. *Amidst an Isle, &c.*] There was, according to true History, such an Island of *Calypso*, of which *Strabo* writes ; that *Solon* gives an account of the Island *Atlantis* bordering upon *Egypt*, and that he went thither to make inquiry, and learned that an Island was once there, but by time was vanished. *Eusebius*.

†. 67. *Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye  
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;  
 Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears  
 End in the starry vault, and prop the Spheres.]*

*Atlas* is here said to understand all the depths of the sea : but the Epithet *ὀλοόφρων* applied to him, has two different significations. It implies either, *one whose thoughts are full of terrible and dismal things*, or *one who has infinite and unbounded views*, and it is doubtful which of them *Homer* means. To reconcile both, may we not think our Author had heard something of the ancient tradition which makes *Atlas* the same person with *Enoch*, and represents him as a great astronomer, who prophesied of the universal deluge, and exhorted mankind to repentance ? Therefore he named his son *Methuselah*, to shew that after his death the waters should overspread the face of the earth. His continual lamentations on this occasion caused him to be called the *Weeper* ; for the world is always an enemy to melancholy predictions. Thus *Homer* upon the credit of this Tradition might very well call *Atlas*, *one whose thoughts*

Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears  
 End in the starry vault, and prop the Spheres.) 70  
 By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,  
 Who foothes to dear delight his anxious mind :  
 Successless all her soft careffes prove,  
 To banish from his breast his Country's love ;

*ran upon dismal things, or one whose views and cares were vastly extended.*

I insist no otherwise upon this, but as a conjecture; yet it is further strengthened by what follows in the next lines : *That Atlas sustains those Columns, which being fixed upon the earth support the Heavens.* This is generally interpreted of his great skill in Astronomy and Geography. But may not the reason be more particular? Since *Atlas* or *Enoch* had prophesied of the Deluge, and since that prediction was looked upon as the effect of his skill in Astronomy; might it not be said he knew the abysses of the Sea, and sustained the pillars of Heaven, to express that he knew how the fountains of the deep, and the waters above the Heavens should unite to drown the earth?

As to the image of the *pillars of Heaven*, it is frequent in the sacred books, and used to express the height of vast mountains. (*Pindar* calls *Ætna* the ἑσπερίαν κίονα :) and there might probably be something more particular that furnished *Homer* with this idea; I mean the pillars of *Hercules*, well known in his time, and neighbouring to the mountain he describes.  
*Dacier.*

See the description of this mountain in the fourth book of *Virgil*, where the same image is preserved without any hint of allegory: as indeed it is no more than a poetical manner of expressing the *great height* and *extensive prospect* of the mountain.

To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75 }  
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies, }  
 With what contentment could he close his eyes? }  
 And will Omnipotence neglect to save  
 The suffering virtue of the wise and brave?  
 Must he, whose altars on the *Phrygian* shore 80  
 With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,  
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,  
 Unblest'd, abandon'd to the wrath of *Jove*?

§. 75. *To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise.*] There is an agreeable tenderness in this Image, and nothing can better paint the ardent desire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long absence. This is still stronger than that which *Cicero* extols in several places of his works, that *Ulysses* preferred the sight of *Ithaca* to the Immortality proffered him by *Calypso*. He here desires to purchase, at the price of his life, the pleasure, not of returning to his country, but even of seeing at a distance the very smoke of it. *Dacier*,

There are some things dispersed in this speech of *Pallas*, which I shall lay together; as that *Minerva* makes it an aggravation to the calamity of *Ulysses*, to be detained by a Goddess that loves him; that he is inclosed in an Island; and she adds, round which the Seas flow; as if that was not common to all Islands; but these expressions are used to shew the impossibility of the escape of *Ulysses*, without the interposition of *Jupiter*.

In the conclusion she observes, that *Ulysses* never neglected to sacrifice before *Troy*: this is said to shew the great piety of *Ulysses*, who not only paid his sacrifices in *Ithaca*, where he abounded in riches, but amongst strangers in an enemy's country, where there might be a scarcity of offerings. *Eustathius*,

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips  
unweigh'd?

(Reply'd the Thund'rer to the Martial Maid) 85

Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress'd  
Of human race the wisest and the best.

*Neptune*, by pray'r repentant rarely won,  
Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his Giant-son,  
Whose visual orb *Ulysses* robb'd of light; 90

Great *Polypheme*, of more than mortal might!

Him young *Thoösa* bore (the bright increase

Of *Phorcys*, dreaded in the sounds and seas:)

Whom *Neptune* ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,  
And in his cave the yielding nymph compress'd. 95

‡. 84. *Daughter! what words, &c.*] This verse is frequently repeated both in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; it has here a particular energy. *Jupiter* reproves *Minerva* for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an Hero so pious as *Ulysses*. It is spoken with vehemence; an instance, says *Eustathius*, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of Divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

‡. 89. *T' avenge his Giant-son.*] It is artful in the Poet to tell the Reader the occasion of the sufferings of *Ulysses* in the opening of the Poem; it is a Justice due to his character, to shew that his misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of *Neptune's* anger.

It is observable, that *Homer* does not stop to explain how *Ulysses* put out the eye of the *Cyclops*: he hastens forward into the middle of his Poem, and leaves that for the future narration of *Ulysses*.

For this, the God constrains the *Greek* to roam,  
 A hopeless exile from his native home,  
 From death alone exempt — but cease to mourn;  
 Let all combine t' atchieve his wish'd return:  
*Neptune* aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100  
 Or thwart the synod of the Gods in vain.

Father and King ador'd! *Minerva* cry'd,  
 Since all who in th' *Olympian* bow'r reside  
 Now make the wand'ring *Greek* their publick care,  
 Let *Hermes* to th' \* *Atlantick* isle repair; 105  
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright *Calypso's* court,  
 The Sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report:  
 That wise *Ulysses* to his native land  
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.  
 Meantime *Telemachus*, the blooming heir 110  
 Of sea-girt *Ithaca*, demands my care:

\* *Ogygia*.

§. 110. Meantime *Telemachus* — demands my care, &c.] *Rapin* has raised several objections against this piece of conduct in *Homer*: he tells us that the action of the *Odyssey* is imperfect, that it begins with the voyages of *Telemachus*, and ends with those of *Ulysses*: that the four first books are all concerning *Telemachus*: that his voyage bears no proportion to that of *Ulysses*: that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by *Jupiter*, and the assistance of the

'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,  
In sage debates ; furrounded with his Peers,

*Phæaciens* : that this gave occasion to *Beni* in his *Academical Discourses* to assert, that the Fable of the *Odyssey* is double : that the four first books of it are neither Episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connection with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity ; the destruction of the Suitors is the chief hinge upon which the Poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of *Ulysses* in his country and regality ; and whatever contributes to this end. contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the Poem ; and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the Suitors, and controlls their insolence ; it preserves *Ulysses's* throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives *Telemachus* courage to resist their attempts : it sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the Poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

*Eustathius* judiciously observes, that *Homer* here prepares the way for the defeat of the Suitors, the chief design of his Poem ; and lays the ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his Poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be asked for what end this voyage of *Telemachus* is made ; the answer is, to inquire after *Ulysses* : so that whatever Episodes are interwoven, *Ulysses* is still in view ; and whatever *Telemachus* acts, is undertaken solely upon his account ; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration of *Ulysses*. So that the Fable is intire, and the Action not double.

It is to be remembered also, that the sufferings of *Ulysses* are the subject of the Poem ; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestick misfortunes ; and by this conduct *Homer* shews us the extent of his misfortunes : his Queen is attempted, his Throne threatened, and his Wealth consumed

To save the state ; and timely to restrain  
 The bold intrusion of the Sutor-train ;      115  
 Who croud his palace, and with lawless pow'r  
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.  
 To distant *Sparta*, and the spacious waste  
 Of sandy *Pyle*, the royal Youth shall haste.

in riot ; *Ulysses* suffers in *Telemachus*, and in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

ψ. 112. 'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.] In this the Poet draws the out-lines of what he is to fill up in the four subsequent books : and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon so plain a foundation such a noble superstructure : he entertains us with variety of Episodes, historical relations, and manners of those ancient times : it must be confessed, that the characters in the *Odyssey*, and the number of the chief actors, are but few ; and yet the Poet never tires : he varies and diversifies the story so happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to engage our attention. He resembles his own *Proteus*, he is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same Deity.

ψ. 118. To distant *Sparta*, and the spacious waste  
 Of sandy *Pyle* —]

*Rapin* is very severe upon this conduct. When *Telemachus*, says he, is to search for his father in the courts of *Greece*, he cannot make the least progress without *Minerva* ; it is she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in the execution. Could not honour, duty or nature have moved his heart towards an absent father ? The machine, adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, inasmuch as the Goddess conducts him to every place, except only where *Ulysses* resides ; of which she ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her Divinity.



There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire  
That from his realm retards his God-like Sire: 121  
Deliv'ring early to the voice of Fame  
The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said: the sandals of celestial mold  
Fledg'd with Ambrosial plumes, and rich with  
gold, 125  
Surround her feet; with these sublime she sails  
Th' aerial space, and mounts the winged gales:  
O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,  
Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore, 129  
Pond'rous and vast; which, when her fury burns,  
Proud Tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'er-  
turns.

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to inquire in those places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of *Telemachus*: and Poetry, which delights in the Wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to *Minerva* the Goddess of it. No doubt but *Minerva* knew where *Ulysses* resided: but men must act as men; such an immediate interposition as *Rapin* requires, had stopped at once the fountain of the Poet's invention. If what a Poet invents be natural, it is justifiable; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

From high *Olympus* prone her flight she bends,  
And in the realm of *Ithaca* descends.

Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise  
Of *Mentes*' form conceal'd from human eyes : 135  
(*Mentes*, the Monarch of the *Taphian* land)

A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.  
There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid  
Enormous riot and mis-rule survey'd.

†. 136. *Mentes, the Monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that *Homer* was so sensible of friendship, that to do honour to his particular friends, he immortalised their names in his Poems. In the *Iliad* he has shewn his gratitude to *Tychius*; and in the *Odyssey*, to *Mentes*, *Phemius*, and *Mentor*. This *Mentes* was a famous Merchant of the isle of *Leucade*, who received *Homer* at *Smyrna*, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this *Mentes* we owe the two Poems of *Homer*; for the Poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he received, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. *Homer* is not contented to give his name to the King of the *Taphians*, but feigns also that the Goddess of Wisdom chose to appear in his shape preferably to that of all the Kings who were nearer neighbours to *Ithaca*. *Eustathius* thinks there might have been a real King of *Taphos* of this name, who was a friend to *Ulysses*. This may possibly be; but I would chuse to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. *Dacier*.

†. 139. *Enormous riot and mis-rule.*] This is the first appearance of the Suitors; and the Poet has drawn their pictures in such colours, as are agreeable to their characters through the whole Poem: They are, as *Horace* expresses it,

On hides of Beeves, before the palace gate, 140

(Sad spoils of luxury) the Suitors sat.

With rival art, and ardour in their mien,

At Chefs they vie, to captivate the Queen ;

Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,

A menial train the flowing bowl supply : 145

“ — — — Fruges consumere nati,

“ Sponsi Penelopes, ‘Nebulones’ ” —

The Poet gives a fine contrast between them and *Telemachus* ; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of things, and beholds with a virtuous sorrow the disorders of the Suitors : he appears (like *Ulysses* among his transformed companions in the tenth book) a wise man, among brutes.

†. 143. *At Chefs they vie, to captivate the Queen ;*

*Divining of their loves. —]*

There are great disputes what this Game was, at which the Suitors played. *Athenæus* relates it from *Apian* the Grammarian, who had it from *Cteson* a native of *Ithaca*, that the sport was in this manner. The number of the Suitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls ; that is to say, fifty-four on each side ; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or *Queen*, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot ; he who took or displaced that mark, got his own in its place ; and if by a second man, he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game ; and it passed as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or *Queen*, was called by whatever name the Gamblers pleased ; and the Suitors gave it the name of *Penelope*.

Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,  
 And form the costly feast with busy care.  
 There young *Telemachus*, his bloomy face  
 Glowing celestial sweet, with God-like grace  
 Amid the Circle shines: but hope and fear 150  
 (Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.  
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd  
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful Lord;  
 The proud Oppressors fly the vengeful sword. }  
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs  
 swell'd; 155

The stranger Guest, the royal Youth beheld:  
 Griev'd that a Visitant so long should wait  
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a Monarch's gate;

It is said, this Game was invented by *Palamedes* during the siege of *Troy*. [*Sophocles in Palam.*] *Eustathius. Spondanus. Dacier.*

†. 157. *Griev'd that a Visitant so long should wait.*] The Reader will lose much of the pleasure of this Poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world; it sets before him persons, places and actions that existed three thousand years ago: here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages: *Telemachus* pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger: he attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality.

Instant he flew with hospitable haste,  
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd.  
 Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest, 161  
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest :  
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,  
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.

Thus affable and mild, the Prince precedes, 165  
 And to the dome th' unknown Celestial leads.  
 The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd  
 Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd ;  
 Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood  
*Ulysses'* Arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170  
 He led the Goddess to the sov'reign seat,  
 Her feet supported with a stool of state ;  
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)  
 Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side ;  
 Far from the Suitor-train, a brutal crowd, 175  
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud :  
 Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,  
 If haply conscious, of his Father's fate.  
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,  
 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ; 180

With copious water the bright vase supplies  
 A silver laver, of capacious size :  
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,  
 They heap the glitt'ring Canisters with bread :  
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185  
 Of choicest fort and flavour, rich repast !

ψ. 185, &c. *The Feast describ'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon *Homer*, than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments: it has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to describe them; nay his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of *Horace*,

“ *Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.*”

But we must not condemn without stronger evidence: a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments described in the Poem, it may not be improper to give *this* some explanation.

They wash before the feast; perhaps, says *Eustathius*, because they always, at the feast, made libations to the Gods. The Ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was poured of silver, and the cups out of which they drank, were of gold.

A damsel attends *Mentes*, but heralds wait upon the Suitors: *Eustathius* observes a decency in this conduct; the Suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful Youths attend the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A Matron who has the charge of the household (ταμὴν) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so *Eustathius* interprets

Delicious wines th' attending herald brought;  
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.  
 Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,  
 In rush'd the Suitors with voracious haste: 190  
 Marshall'd in order due, to each a Sew'r  
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.  
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round  
 Gay stripling youthsthebrimming goblets crown'd.  
 The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195  
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance:  
 To *Phemius* was consign'd the chorded Lyre,  
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:

*ειδδλα*; an officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnished out the rest of the entertainment; and after the feast, a Bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental musick.

*Dacier* is in great pain about the cold victuals; she is afraid lest the Reader should think them the leavings of a former day: and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold *Tongues*, *Fambons*, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless: we must have reference to the customs of those early ages; and if it was customary for cold meats to be served up (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of *Telemachus*.

∫. 197. *To Phemius was consign'd the chorded Lyre.*] In ancient times, Princes entertained in their families certain learned and wise men, who were both Poets and Philosophers,

*Phemius*, whose voice divine could sweetest sing  
High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest  
His indignation thus the Prince exprest.

Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)  
With song and dance the pompous revel end.

Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205  
When, for the dear delight, another pays.

*His* treasur'd stores these Cormorants consume,  
Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb

And common turf, lie naked on the plain,

Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210

Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,

With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,

and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. *Ulysses*, at his departure for *Troy*, left one of these with *Penelope*: and it was usual to consign in this manner, the care of their wives and families to the Poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man *Homer* gives the name of *Phemius*; to celebrate one of his friends, who was so called, and who had been his Preceptor (says *Eustathius*.) I must add one remark, that though he places his master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the Suitors by compulsion: This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.



Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,  
And curse their cumb'rous pride's unweildy  
weight.

But ah I dream! — th' appointed hour is fled, 215  
And Hope, too long with vain delusion fed,  
Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,  
Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!  
With venial freedom let me now demand  
Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land: 220  
Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,  
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?  
Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,  
Or number'd in my father's social train?  
All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225  
And curious much to know, he far was known.

†. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice* —] It is evident from this and many other places in the *Iliad*, that Hospitality was hereditary; an happiness and honour peculiar to those heroick ages. And surely nothing can set the character of *Ulysses* in a more agreeable point of light, than what *Telemachus* here delivers of it: "He was the friend of all mankind." *Eustathius* observes, that *ἡσίοφος* has a middle signification; that it implies that *Ulysses* behaved benevolently to all men; or that all men behaved benevolently to *Ulysses*; either sense makes *Ulysses* a very amiable person: he must be a friend to all men, to whom all men are friends.

My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd Virgin cries)  
 From great *Anchialus*, renown'd and wife :  
*Mentes* my name ; I rule the *Taphian* race,  
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves em-  
 brace :

230

A duteous people, and industrious Isle,  
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.  
 Freight with Iron from my native land,  
 I steer my voyage to the *Brutian* strand ;

†. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand.*] In the country of the *Brutians*, in the lower part of *Italy*, was a town called *Temese*. That *Homer* here meant this city, and not one of the same name in *Cyprus*, appears not only because this was famous for works of brass, but because (as *Strabo* observes) *Ithaca* lay in the direct way from *Taphos* to this city of the *Brutii* ; whereas it was considerably out of the way to pass by *Ithaca* to that of *Cyprus*. The same Author says, that the rooms for preparing of brass were remaining in his time, though then out of use. *Ovid. Met. xv.*

“ Hippotadæque domos regis, *Temese*que metalla.”

And *Statius, Sylv.*

“ — — — se totis *Temese* dedit hausta metallis.”

*Bochart* is of opinion, that the name of *Temese* was given to this town by the *Phœnicians*, from the brass it produced, *Temes* in their language signifying Fusion of Metals : an art to which the *Phœnicians* much applied themselves. *Eustathius. Dacier.*

To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235

A just proportion of refulgent Brass.

Far from your Capital my ship resides

At *Reitbrus*, and secure at anchor rides;

Where waving groves on airy *Neion* grow,

Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240

Thence to re-visit your imperial dome,

An old hereditary Guest I come :

Your father's friend. *Laertes* can relate

Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;

Who prest with heart-corroding grief and years,

To the gay Court a rural shed prefers, 246

\*. 245. *Laertes's Retirement.*] This most beautiful passage of *Laertes* has not escaped the censure of the Criticks: they say he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a King, and reduces himself unworthily into the condition of a servant. *Eustathius* gives two reasons for his retirement, which answer those objections; the first is, that he could not endure to see the outrage and insolence of the Suitors; the second, that his Grief for *Ulysses* makes him abandon society, and prefer his vineyard to his Court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction; for sorrow loves solitude. Thus it is, as *Dacier* well observes, that *Menedemus* in *Terence* laments his lost son: *Menedemus* is the picture of *Laertes*. Nor does it make any difference, that the one is a King, the other a person of private station: Kings are but ennobled humanity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not greater sensibility.

Where sole of all his train, a Matron sage  
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,  
 With feeble steps from marshalling his Vines  
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250

With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,  
 To hail *Ulysses'* safe return I came :  
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r  
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.  
 Let not your Soul be sunk in sad despair; 255  
 He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,  
 Among a savage race, whose shelly bounds  
 With ceaseless roar the foaming deep furrounds.

The word *ἰριζόμενα* (*creeping* about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it; but *Eustathius* observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of *Laertes*, and denotes no meanness of spirit: the same word is applied to the great *Achilles* in the *Iliad*, when he laments at the Obsequies of *Patroclus*; and *Horace* no doubt had it in his view,

“ — — — Tacitum fylvas inter-reptare salubres.”

§. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of *Eustathius*, that what *Minerva* here delivers bears resemblance to the Oracles, in which part is false, and part true: that *Ulysses* is detained in an Island, is a truth; that he is detained by Barbarians, a falshood: this is done by the Goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not

The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd  
breast,

To me, no Scer, th' inspiring Gods suggest ; 260  
Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetick eye  
To judge the winged omens of the sky.

Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain ;  
Tho' Adamantine bonds the chief restrain,  
The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265  
And soon restore him to his regal feat.

But, gen'rous youth ! sincere and free declare,  
Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir ?  
For sure *Ulysses* in your look appears,

The same his features, if the same his years. 270  
Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy  
E'er *Greece* assembled stemm'd the tides to *Troy* ;

the certainty of a Goddess ; she raises his expectation by shewing she has an insight into futurity ; and to engage his belief she discovers in part the truth to *Telemachus*. Neither was it necessary or convenient for *Telemachus* to know the whole truth : for if he had known that *Ulysses* inhabited a desert, detained by a Goddess, he must of consequence have known of his return, (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other) and so had never gone in search of him ; and it would hence have happened, that *Homer* had been deprived of giving us those graces of Poetry which arise from the voyage of *Telemachus*. *Eustathius*.

But parting then for that detested shore,  
Our eyes unhappy ! never greeted more.

To prove a genuine birth (the Prince replies)  
On Female truth assenting faith relies ; 276

§. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.*] There is an appearance of something very shocking in this speech of *Telemachus*. It literally runs thus : *My mother assures me that I am the Son of Ulysses, but I know it not.* It seems to reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in *Telemachus*, says *Eustathius*, is the effect of a troubled spirit ; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous *Ulysses* ; it is no reflection upon *Penelope*, and consequently no fault in *Telemachus* : it is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child : thus *Euripides*,

Ἡ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς ὁδὸν ὦλα, ὅθ' οἶσται.

that is, the mother knows the child, the father only believes it.

Thus also *Menander*,

Αὐτὸν γὰρ ὁδὸς οἶδε, τῷ πῶς ἐγένετο·

Ἄλλ' ὑπονοῦμεν πάλης, ἢ πιστεύομεν.

that is, No man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

*Aristotle* in his *Rhetorick* is also of this opinion ;

\* Ἀρετὰ περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said, is literally translated from *Eustathius*, and if it edifies the Reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, *Mentes* asks *Telemachus* if he be the son of *Ulysses* ; he replies, “ So my mother assures me ; but nothing sure so wretched as I am could proceed from that great man.”

Thus manifest of right, I build my claim  
 Sure-founded on a fair Maternal fame,  
*Ulysses'* Son : but happier he, whom fate  
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which tosse the  
 great! 280

Happier the son, whose hoary fire is blest  
 With humble affluence, and domestick rest!  
 Happier than I, to future empire born,  
 But doom'd a Father's wretched fate to mourn!

To whom, with aspect mild, the Guest divine.  
 Oh true descendant of a scepter'd line! 286  
 The Gods, a glorious fate from anguish free  
 To chaste *Penelope's* increase decree.

But say, yon' jovial Troop so gaily drest,  
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast! 290

Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,  
 Unseemly flown with insolence and wine;  
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy  
 Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye?

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few  
 Ladies would take it as a compliment, if their sons should tell  
 them there was room to doubt of their legitimacy; there may  
 be abundance of truth in it, and yet very little decency.

Magnificence of old (the Prince reply'd) 295  
 Beneath our roof with Virtue could reside ;  
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,  
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent Lord ;  
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,  
 Bitter constraint ! erroneous and forlorn. 300  
 Better the Chief, on *Ilion's* hostile plain,  
 Had fall'n furrounded with his warlike train ;  
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,  
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last !  
 Then grateful *Greece* with streaming eyes would  
 raise

Historick Marbles, to record his praise ; 306  
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,  
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his Son.  
 Now snatch'd by Harpies to the dreary coast,  
 Sunk is the Hero, and his glory lost : 310  
 Vanish'd at once ! unheard-of, and unknown !  
 And I his Heir in misery alone.

ψ. 309. *Now snatch'd by Harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that *Ulysses* has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the Ancients was esteemed the greatest of calamities, as it hindered the Shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.



Nor for a dear, lost Father only flow  
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe :  
 To tempt the spouseless Queen with am'rous wiles,  
 Resort the Nobles from the neighb'ring Isles ; 316  
 From *Samos*, circled with th' *Ionian* main,  
*Dulichium*, and *Zacynthus*' silvan reign :  
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t'ascend,  
 The Lords of *Ithaca* their right pretend. 320  
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,  
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.  
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,  
 My stores-in riotous expence devour,

†. 315. *To tempt the spouseless Queen — resort the Nobles.* ]  
 It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the Suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the *Odyssey*. It may seem incredible that *Penelope*, who is a Queen, in whom the supreme power is lodged, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects : besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection we must consider the nature of the *Grecian* governments : the chief men of the land had great authority : though the government was monarchical, it was not despotick : *Laertes* was retired, and disabled with age ; *Telemachus* was yet in his minority ; and the fear of any violence either against her own person, or against her son, might deter *Penelope* from using any endeavours to remove men of such insolence, and such power. *Dacier*.

In feast and dance the mirthful months employ,  
And meditate my doom, to crown their joy. 326

With tender pity touch'd, the Goddess cry'd :  
Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,  
Soon may your Sire discharge the vengeance due,  
And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue !  
Oh ! in that portal should the chief appear, 331  
Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,  
In radiant Panoply his limbs incas'd ;  
(For so of old my father's court he grac'd,  
When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335  
O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl)  
He then from *Ephyre*, the fair domain  
Of *Ilus*, sprung from *Jason's* royal strain,  
Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain. }  
For voyaging to learn the direful art 340  
To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart ;

\*. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart.*] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view, as if *Ulysses* had requested what a good man could not grant. *Ilus*, says *Mentes*, denied the Poison, because he feared the anger of the Gods ; and the poison itself is called by *Homer* *Ἀνδροφόνος*, as if it were designed against mankind. *Eustathius* defends *Ulysses* variously : he intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only, that infested his country, or in hunting. He

Observant of the Gods, and sternly just,  
*Ilus* refus'd t' impart the baneful trust :  
 With friendlier zeal my Father's soul was fir'd,  
 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd.  
 Appear'd he now with such heroick port, 346  
 As then conspicuous at the *Taphian* court ;  
 Soon should yon' boasters cease their haughty strife,  
 Or each atone his guilty love with life.  
 But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350  
 Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.  
 My sentence hear : with stern distaste avow'd,  
 To their own districts drive the Suitor-crowd :  
 When next the morning warms the purple East,  
 Convoke the Peerage, and the Gods attest ; 355

assigns another reason, and says that the Poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the Suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal ; on this account the Poison may be called ἀνδροφόνον ; for it is certain in the wars of *Troy* poisoned arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recovered ; so that of necessity they must be reserved for domestick occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why *Antichialus* granted the poison to *Ulysses*, and *Ilus* denied it ; *Antichialus* was the friend of *Ulysses*, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose : but *Ilus*, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it. *Eustathius*.

The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;  
 And form sure plans to save the sinking state.  
 Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,  
 And the chaste Queen connubial rites require ;  
 Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360  
 To great *Icarius*, whose paternal care  
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice  
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.

‡. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what *Eustathius* observes upon these words. 'There is a Solecism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduced to the rules of construction. It should be μήτηρ, not μήτέρα ἅψ' ἴτω. How then comes the accusative case to be used instead of the nominative? *Mentes*, adds he, may be supposed to have intended to have said ἀπομίμνον, (send thy Mother away;) but considering in the midst of the Sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to *Telemachus*, he checks himself and suppresses ἀπομίμνον; and no other word immediately occurring, that required an accusative case, he falls into a Solecism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; though *Mentes* was in haste when he spoke it, *Homer* was not when he composed it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a Transcriber, who might write Μήτέρα for Μήτηρ? This is the more probable, because the one stands in the verse in every respect as well as the other.

What *Eustathius* adds is very absurd: he says that *Telemachus* must observe both the interpretations, either send thy Mother away, or let thy Mother retire. So that the advice was double, send thy Mother away if thou dost not love her; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

Then let this dictate of my love prevail :  
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365  
 To learn your Father's fortunes : fame may prove,  
 Or omen'd Voice, (the messenger of *Jove*)  
 Propitious to the search. Direct your toil  
 Thro' the wide Ocean first to sandy *Pyle* ;  
 Of *Nestor*, hoary Sage, his doom demand : 370  
 Thence speed your voyage to the *Spartan* strand ;  
 For young *Atrides* to th' *Achaian* coast  
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.  
 If yet *Ulysses* views the light ; forbear,  
 'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year. 375  
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,  
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous Night ;  
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,  
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,

\*. 367. *Omen'd Voice* — of *Jove*.] There is a difficulty in this Passage. In any case of enquiry, any Words that were heard by accident were called by the *Latins*, *Omens* ; by *Homer*, the *Voice of Jupiter* ; and he styles them so, because it is through his providence that those words come to our knowledge : *κλῆος* signifies *fame* or *rumour* ; and the Ancients referred all voices or sounds to *Jupiter* ; and stiled him *Ζεὺς πανομφαῖος*. So that the voice of *Jove* implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or enquiries. *Dacier*. *Eustathius*.

Plant the fair Column o'er the vacant grave, 380

A Hero's honours let the Hero have.

With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,

For the chaste Queen select an equal Lord.

Then let revenge your daring mind employ,  
By fraud or force the Suitor-train destroy, 385 }  
And starting into manhood, scorn the boy. }

Hast thou not heard how young *Orestes*, fir'd

With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd?

His virgin-sword, *Ægysthus*' veins imbru'd;

The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood, 390

O greatly blest'd with every blooming grace!

With equal steps the paths of glory trace;

ψ. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of *Orestes* does not come fully up to the purpose intended: there is a wide difference in the circumstances: *Orestes* slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of *Telemachus* are not against one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of *Telemachus*, as is the case of *Orestes*: nor is *Penelope* an adulteress. The intent therefore of the Goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents: *Orestes*, says *Mentes*, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

The sense that *καίροφόνος* here bears is remarkable, it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. *Eustathius*.

Join to that royal youth's your rival name,  
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame, —  
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 395  
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.  
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;  
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my Friend (the Youth re-  
 join'd)

Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400  
 So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)  
 Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.  
 But, since to part, for sweet refection due  
 The genial viands let my train renew:  
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405  
 Worthy the heir of *Ithaca* to give.

Defer the promis'd boon, (the Goddess  
 cries,

Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes)  
 And let me now regain the *Reithrian* port:  
 From *Temese'* return'd, your royal court 410  
 I shall revisit; and that pledge receive;  
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky;  
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.  
 Then first he recognis'd th' Ætherial guest; 415  
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast:  
 Heroick thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate:  
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,  
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng;  
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420

℥. 413. — — *With eagle-speed she cut the sky;  
 Instant invisible ———]*

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given to the word ἀνοραία; some say it implies she flew up the chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle: but it may also signify the same as ἀφανής (invisible,) either of the latter senses are natural, or both together, *like an eagle she disappeared.* *Eustathius.*

℥. 420. *Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.*] There may be two reasons why this is inserted; either the Suitors were pleased with the sweetness of the song, or the subject of it; they sat attentive to hear the death of *Ulysses*, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately *Penelope* descended to stop the song; she feared lest he might touch upon the story of *Ulysses*, and say that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferred to marry. *Phemius* would have certainly found credit, for Poets were believed to be inspired by the Gods; they were looked upon as Prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from *Demodocus* in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If *Phemius* had declared him to be dead, *Penelope* could not have avoided marriage; if



His tender theme the charming Lyrist chose  
*Minerva's* anger, and the direful woes  
 Which voyaging from *Troy* the Victors bore,  
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.  
 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425  
 Reflecting to the Queen the silver sounds.  
 With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends;  
 Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends:  
 A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,  
 And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430  
 There from the portal, with her mild command  
 Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.

alive, the Suitors might have desisted, or armed themselves against *Ulysses*, and then their deaths, one of the principal incidents of the Poem, could not have followed; neither could *Telemachus* have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the Poet to cut the song short; he reserves the story of *Ulysses* for future narration; and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the interposition of *Penelope*, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow.

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men; as appears from the conduct of *Helen*, *Arete*, *Nausicaa*, and *Penelope*, in divers parts of the *Odyssey*: she is here introduced with the greatest decency; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil. *Eustathius*.

*Phemius!* let acts of Gods, and Heroes old,  
 What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,  
 Attemper'd to the Lyre, your voice employ; 435  
 Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.  
 But oh! forbear that dear, disastrous name,  
 To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame:  
 My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,  
 And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,  
 (Reply'd the Prince) will you the Bard reprove?  
 Oft', *Jove's* ætherial rays (resistless fire)  
 The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire;

†. 443. *Oft', Jove's ætherial rays, &c.]* *Telemachus* here reproves his mother for commanding *Phemius* to desist, or not to make *Ulysses* the subject of his song: by saying, that it was not in the Poet's own power to chuse his subject, which was frequently dictated and inspired by the Gods. This is a particular instance of the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of their Poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense. *If the subject displease you, it is not the Poet, but Jupiter is to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases.* And *Madam Dacier* strangely mistakes this passage, in rendering it, *it is not the Poet, but Jupiter, who is the cause of our misfortunes, for it is he who dispenses to wretched mortals good or evil as he pleases.* At the same time she acknowledges the word *ἀφρηταί*, which she here renders *laborious, or wretched*, to signify *persons of wit*, in the beginning of lib. vi. and *persons of skill and ability in their art*, in lib. xiii.

Instinct divine! nor blame severe his choice, 445  
 Warbling the *Grecian* woes with harp and voice:  
 For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;  
 But old, the mind with inattention hears;  
 Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain;  
 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450  
 And in the publick woe forget your own;  
 You weep not for a perish'd Lord, alone.  
 What *Greeks*, now wand'ring in the *Stygian* gloom,  
 With your *Ulysses* shar'd an equal doom!  
 Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455  
 And various labours of the loom, beguile;  
 There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,  
 That care to man belongs, and most to me.

†. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.*] These verses are taken literally from the sixth book of the *Iliad*, except that *μῦθος* is inserted instead of *πόλεμος*; *Eustathius* explains the passage thus: *Women are not forbid intirely to speak, for women are talking animals, λαλοῦντων ζῶον, they have the faculty of talking, and indeed are rational creatures*; but they must not give too much liberty to that unruly member, in the company of men. *Sophocles* advises well,

Γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ ἴσῃ φέμει.

*O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex.* Madam *Dacier*, though she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.

Mature beyond his years the Queen admires  
His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460  
Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,  
With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds;  
'Till *Pallas*, piteous of her plaintive cries,  
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindl'd at the royal charms, 465  
Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms;  
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;  
But bold *Telemachus* assum'd the man.  
Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,  
Ye deedless boasters! and the song attend; 470  
Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane  
With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.  
Pacifick now prolong the jovial feast;  
But when the dawn reveals the rosy East,  
I, to the Peers assembled, shall propose 475  
The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.  
No longer live the cankers of my court;  
All to your several states with speed resort;  
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,  
There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480

But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed  
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed ;  
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial *Jove* ! —  
 By him and all th' immortal thrones above,  
 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain, 485  
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd by the Prince, thus haughty, bold, and  
 young,

Ragegnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.  
 Silence at length the gay *Antinous* broke,  
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490  
 What God to your untutor'd youth affords  
 This headlong torrent of amazing words ?

§. 491. *The speech of Antinous.*] *Antinous* and *Eurymachus* are *Ithacensians*, and are called the chief of the Suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their characters ; *Antinous* is violent, and determined against *Ulysses* ; *Eurymachus* more gentle and subtle ; *Antinous* derides, *Eurymachus* flatters.

This speech of *Antinous* is a concealed raillery ; he tells *Telemachus*, that *Jove* inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learned nothing from man ; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in *Ithaca*, because the weight of a crown is a burden ; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that it is his by descent only, and not by merit.

*Telemachus*, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of *Antinous*, he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ

May *Jove* delay thy reign, and cumber late  
So bright a genius with the toils of state!

Those toils (*Telemachus* serene replies) 495  
Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wife.  
Fast by the Throne obsequious *Fame* resides,  
And *Wealth* incessant rolls her golden tides.  
Nor let *Antinous* rage, if strong desire  
Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500  
Elect by *Jove* his Delegate of sway,  
With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.

only in opinion about the Regality. Think you, says he, that to be a King is to be miserable? To be a King, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the Suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. *Eustathius*.

The speech of *Eurymachus* confirms the former observation, that this Suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than *Antinous*: he cloaths ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: *Telemachus* had said, that if it was the will of *Jupiter*, he would ascend the Throne of *Ithaca*: *Eurymachus* answers, that this was as the Gods should determine; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. *Telemachus* said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance: *Eurymachus* wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him: the latent meaning of which is, "we of your own country are sufficient for that Design." If these observations of *Eustathius* be true, *Eurymachus* was not a less enemy than *Antinous*, but a better dissembler.

Whene'er *Ulysses* roams the realm of Night,  
 Shou'd factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,  
 Some other *Greeks* a fairer claim may plead; 505  
 To your pretence their title wou'd precede.  
 At least, the scepter lost, I still shou'd reign  
 Sole o'er my vassals, and domestick train.

To this *Eurymachus*. To heav'n alone  
 Refer the choice to fill the vacant Throne. 510  
 Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;  
 Undoubted all your filial claim confess:  
 Your private right shou'd impious pow'r invade,  
 The peers of *Ithaca* wou'd arm in aid.  
 But say, that Stranger-guest who late with-  
 drew,  
 What and from whence? his name and lineage  
 shew.

His grave demeanour, and majestick grace  
 Speak him descended of no vulgar race:  
 Did he some loan of antient right require,  
 Or came fore-runner of your scepter'd Sire? 520

Oh son of *Polybus*! the Prince replies,  
 No more my Sire will glad these longing eyes:

The Queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,  
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.

That stranger-guest the *Taphian* realm obeys, 525  
A realm defended with incircling seas.

*Mentes*, an ever-honour'd name, of old  
High in *Ulysses'* social list inroll'd.

Thus he, tho' conscious of th' ætherial Guest,  
Answer'd evasive of the fly request. 530

Meantime the Lyre rejoins the sprightly lay;  
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.

But when the Star of Eve, with golden light  
Adorn'd the matron-brow of fable Night;

The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535  
And to their several domes to Rest resort.

A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd;

To this his steps the thoughtful Prince inclin'd;  
In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs;

The lighted torch, the sage *Euryclea* bears: 540

†. 540. *The sage Euryclea,*] *Euryclea* was a very aged person; she was bought by *Laertes* to nurse *Ulysses*; and in her old age attends *Telemachus*: she cost *Laertes* twenty Oxen; that is, a certain quantity of money (*ἄλως μισθολογίας*) which would buy twenty oxen: or perhaps the form of an ox was stamped upon the metal, and from thence had its appellation.



(Daughter of *Ops*, the just *Pisenor*'s son,  
 For twenty beeves by great *Laertes* won;  
 In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,  
 Honour'd by him, a gentle Lord and chaste,  
 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife  
 To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life. 546  
 Sole with *Telemachus* her service ends,  
 A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)  
 Whilst to his couch himself the Prince addrest,  
 The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest: 550  
 The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,  
 The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;  
 The bolt, obedient to the filken cord,  
 To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,  
 Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent  
 shade, 555  
 Pensive, the rules the Goddess gave, he weigh'd;

The simplicity of these Heroick times is remarkable; an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a King: she lights him to his apartment, takes care of his cloaths, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind: this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners. *Eustatbius*.

Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,  
And in his raptur'd soul the Vision glows.

Having now gone through the first book, I shall only observe to the Reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an intire day: when *Minerva* appears to *Telemachus*, the Suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the Gods hold a debate before the descent of *Minerva*, and some small time must be allowed for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one Simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, ὅστις δ' ὧς ἀνέπαυα; the same observation is true of the first book of the *Iliad*, See the Notes on that place,





THE  
SECOND BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.



## The A R G U M E N T.

### The Council of *Ithaca*.

**T**HELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the Lords of *Ithaca*, complains of the Injustice done him by the Suitors, and insists upon their departure from his Palace; appealing to the Princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The Suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the Queen to the Court of *Icarius* her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two Eagles in the sky, which an Augur expounds to the ruin of the Suitors. Telemachus then demands a Vessel to carry him to *Pylos* and *Sparta*, there to enquire of his father's fortunes, *Pallas* in the shape of *Mentor* (an ancient friend of *Ulysses*) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and imbarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the Opening of the Poem.

*The Scene continues in the Palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.*



THE  
\* SECOND BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.

NOW red'ning from the dawn, the Morn-  
ing-ray  
Glow'd in the front of Heav'n, and gave the Day:  
The youthful Hero, with returning light,  
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of Night.

\* This book opens with the first appearance of *Telemachus* upon the stage of action. And *Bossu* observes the great judgment of the Poet, in beginning with the transactions of *Ithaca* in the absence of *Ulysses*: by this method he sets the conduct of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, and the Suitors, in a strong point of light; they all have a large share in the story of the Poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It.

A royal robe he wore with graceful pride,      5  
 A two-edg'd falchion threaten'd by his side,  
 Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,  
 And forth he mov'd, majestick as a God.  
 Then by his Heralds, restless of delay,  
 To council calls the Peers: the Peers obey.      10  
 Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,  
 From his high dome himself descends in state.  
 Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd;  
 Two Dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

is as necessary in Epick Poetry, as it is on the Theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the Poet introduces: this adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest ourselves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

*Telemachus* is now about twenty years of age: in the eleventh book, the Poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother when *Ulysses* sailed to *Troy*; that *Hero* was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of *Telemachus*. He is every where described as a person of piety to the Gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and valiant: and the poet well sets off the importance of this young *Hero*, by giving him the Goddesses of War and Wisdom for his constant attendant.

℥. 13. — — *In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd*] The Poet describes *Telemachus* as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of Peers in his own country: two reasons are assigned

*Pallas* with grace divine his form improves, 15  
And gazing crouds admire him as he moves.

His Father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood  
The hoary Peers, and Aged Wisdom bow'd.

for this conduct ; either this was the common usage of Princes in those times, or *Telemachus* might look upon the Suitors as enemies, and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. *Eustathius*.

§. 14. *Two Dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the Criticks ; they look upon it as a mean description of a Hero and a Prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants : but such was the simplicity of ancient Princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage. And we may be confident *Homer* copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose, he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, through a want of judgment.

*Virgil* judged otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation.

“ *Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto*

“ *Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem.*”

*Patroclus* is described in the *Iliad* with the same attendants.

— — nine large dogs domestick at his board. B. xxiii.

Poetry, observes *Dacier*, is like Painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs : and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the customs of ancient times. It may be added, that the Poet, as well as the Painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints : a modern dress would ill become *Achilles* or *Ulysses*, such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

'Twas silence all, at last *Ægyptius* spoke ;  
*Ægyptius*, by his age and sorrows broke : 20  
 A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,  
 A length of days had bent him to the Ground.  
 His eldest \* hope in arms to *Ilion* came,  
 By great *Ulysses* taught the path to fame ;  
 But (hapless youth) the hideous *Cyclops* tore 25  
 His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.  
 Three sons remain'd : to climb with haughty fires  
 The royal bed, *Eurynomus* aspires ;  
 The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,  
 And ease the Sire of half the cares of age. 30  
 Yet still his *Antiphus* he loves, he mourns,  
 And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.  
 Since great *Ulysses* fought the *Phrygian* plains,  
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.

\* *Antiphus*.

‡. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] *Homer*, says *Eustathius*, inserts these particularities concerning the family of *Ægyptius*, to give an air of truth to his story : it does not appear that *Ægyptius* knew the certainty of the death of *Antiphus* : (for it is the Poet who relates it, and not the father ;) whence, as *Dacier* observes, should he learn it ? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of *Ulysses* were lost with *Ulysses*.

‡. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.*] We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in *Ithaca*, since



Say then, ye Peers! by whose commands we meet?

Why here once more in solemn council sit? 36

Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose:

Arrives some message of invading foes?

Or say, does high necessity of state

Inspire some Patriot, and demand debate! 40

The present Synod speaks its author wise;

Affist him, *Jove*, thou regent of the skies!

the departure of *Ulysses*. The general design and moral of the *Odyssey*, is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the Absence of a King and Father of a Family produces: we deprive, as *Bosju* observes, the Poem of its very soul, and spoil the Fable, if we retrench from it the disorders which the Suitors create in the Absence of *Ulysses*, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related: what must a kingdom suffer in twenty years without a Ruler, without a Council to make Laws or punish enormities? Such is the condition of *Ithaca*: *Laertes* is superannuated; *Penelope* oppressed by the violence of the Suitors; and *Telemachus* to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the Poet to open the assembly by *Ægyptius*: *Telemachus* was the person who convened it: and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it: but to give *Telemachus* courage, who was young and inexperienced, *Ægyptius* first rises, and by praising the person who had summoned them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives *Telemachus* to understand he has friends among the assembly: this he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the Suitors. By this means *Telemachus* is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the Suitors with the utmost freedom.

He spoke. *Telemachus* with transport glows,  
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestick rose :  
 (His royal hand th' imperial scepter sway'd) 45  
 Then thus, addressing to *Ægyptius*, said.

Rev'rend old man ! lo here confest he stands  
 By whom ye meet ; my grief your care demands.  
 No story I unfold of publick woes,  
 Nor bear advices of impending foes : 50  
 Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown ;  
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.  
 For my lost Sire continual sorrows spring,  
 The great, the good ; your Father, and your King.  
 Yet more ; our house from its foundation bows, 55  
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes :

‡. 54. *Your Father, and your King.*] *Telemachus* here sets the character of *Ulysses*, as a King, in the most agreeable point of light : he ruled his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience ; not only as it shews *Ulysses* to have been a good Governor ; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they received from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the Poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of *Ulysses* ; we cannot see a good man and good King in distress, without the most tender emotions.

‡. 55. *Yet more ; our house, &c.*] What *Telemachus* here says, has given offence to the Criticks ; they think it inde-

Hither, unwelcome to the Queen they come;  
 Why seek they not the rich *Icarian* dome?  
 If she must wed, from other hands require  
 The dow'ry: is *Telemachus* her Sire? 60  
 Yet thro' my court the noise of Revel rings,  
 And wastes the wise frugality of Kings.  
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice;  
 Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.

cent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh *Penelope*, *Telemachus*, and his whole posterity, against the single person of *Ulysses*.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that *Telemachus* was still in hopes of his father's return: for ἀπώδεια does not imply necessarily his death, but absence: and then both with justice and decency, *Telemachus* may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of *Ulysses*.

†. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridiculed by the Criticks; they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it: *Telemachus* makes a sad outcry because the Suitors eat his sheep, his bees and fatted goats; and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of Kings and Princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle; thus *Aeneas* and *Paris* are described as tending their flocks, &c. and *Abraham* in the scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

These Criticks would form a different idea of the state and condition of *Telemachus*, if they considered that he had been capable to maintain no fewer than an hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years; for so many

Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65

Nor in the helpless Orphan dread a foe.

But come it will, the time when manhood grants  
More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.

Approach that hour! unsufferable wrong

Cries to the Gods, and vengeance sleeps too long.

Rise then, ye Peers! with virtuous anger rise; 71

Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.

By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,

By righteous *Themis* and by thund'ring *Jove*,

(*Themis*, who gives to councils, or denies 75

Success; and humbles, or confirms the wife)

(with their attendants) were the Suitors, as appears from the sixteenth book: and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and lived with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that *Telemachus* laments: this he expressly declares by the word *μακροδωρος*; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness; and against profusion, without being condemned for parsimony.

†. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies*

*Success; ——— ]*

*Eustathius* observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of *Themis* to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolved; and thus *Themis* may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. *Dacier* dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity;

Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow  
 For my lost Sire, nor add new woe to woe.  
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,  
 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80  
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,  
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.  
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,  
 Be You the spoilers, and our wealth consume.  
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85  
 And raise all *Ithaca* to aid our cause:

He thinks that the assertion of *Telemachus* is general, that he intimates, it is Justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that Injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

I have followed this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of *Homer*, but also as *Jupiter* is mentioned with *Themis*; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly stiled by the ancients Ζεύς ἀγορευτής. In *Sicily* there was an Altar of Ζεύς ἀγορευτής, or of *Jupiter who presides over Councils*. *Eustathius* from *Herodotus*.

γ. 84. *Be You the spoilers, and our wealth consume.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, as *Eustathius* remarks, that *Telemachus* is pleading his cause before the *Ithacensians*; then he constitutes the Judges of his cause: he therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. *We are not the men that are guilty of these Outrages*; *Telemachus* rejoins, “It were better for me to suffer from your hands;” “for by your quiescence you make my affairs desperate;” an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

But while your Sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,  
You make the arm of Violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he  
frown'd,

And dash'd th' imperial scepter to the ground. 90

The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :

The Synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,

Then silent sat — at length *Antinous* burns

With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

O insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95

Such railing eloquence, and war of words.

§. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.*] This passage is not one of those, where the Poet can be blamed for causing a Hero to weep. If we consider the youth of *Telemachus*, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life ; the subjects that demand his concern ; the apprehension of the loss of a father ; and the desolate state of his mother and kingdom : all these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature ; and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the Poet.

§. 95. *O insolence of youth ! &c.*] We find *Antinous* always setting himself in the strongest opposition to *Telemachus* ; and therefore he is the first that falls by the spear of *Ulysses* ; the Poet observes justice, and as *Antinous* is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What *Antinous* says in this speech, concerning the treachery of the female servant of *Penelope*, prepares the way for the punishment *Ulysses* inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the Poem : this is an act of

Studious thy country's worthies to defame,

Thy erring voice displays thy Mother's shame.

Elusive of the bridal day, she gives

Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100

poetical justice; and it is as necessary in Epick as in Tragick Poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. *Eustathius.*

†. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives*

*Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.]*

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of *Penelope*, the Heroine of the Poem, from the aspersions of *Antinous*. It must be confessed that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny; if she consents, she injures *Ulysses*, whom she still expects to return; if she denies, she endangers the throne, and the life of *Telemachus*, from the violence of the Suitors; so that no other method is left to elude their addresses,

I must not conceal what *Eustathius* has mentioned from some Authors, as *Lycophron*, &c. who say that *Penelope* was *κακούρβητα*, in plain *English*, an Harlot: and he quotes *Herodotus*, as affirming that she had a son, named *Pan*, by *Hermes*; but the Bishop declares it is all a scandal; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as described in *Homer*.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks: *Antinous*, an unsuccessful Lover: and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires; and it had been an act of guilt to have complied. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of womankind: so that the seeming inconsistency of *Penelope* must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs: she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceived the Suitors by her messages; a plain intimation, that she used no extraordinary fa-

Did not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,  
For three long Years the royal fraud behold?

While she, laborious in delusion spread  
The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread :  
Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105  
Thus spoke th' inventive Queen, with artful sighs.

“ Tho' cold in death *Ulysses* breathes no more,  
“ Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour ;  
“ Cease, 'till to great *Laërtes* I bequeath  
“ A task of grief, his ornaments of death. 110

miliarities with her Admirers ; and through the whole Course  
of the Poem she seldom appears in their Assemblies.

γ. 109. *Cease, 'till to great Laërtes I bequeath  
A task of grief, his ornaments of death.]*

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of  
Weaving and Embroidery, to honour the funerals of the  
dead : and these were usually wrought by the nearest relations  
in their life-time. Thus in the twenty-second *Iliad*, *Andro-*  
*mache* laments, that the body of *Hector* must be exposed to  
the air, without those ornaments.

— — ἀτάρ τοι εἴματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κείσεται,  
ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς καὶ χαρίεσσα, τέλει μὲν χερσὶ γυναικῶν.

And the mother of *Euryalus* in *Virgil*, to her son.

“ — — — Nec te tua funera mater  
“ Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,  
“ Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque  
“ Urgebam, & tela curas solabar aniles.”



" Left when the Fates his royal ashes claim,  
 " The *Grecian* matrons taint my spotless fame ;  
 " When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,  
 " Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade."

Thus she : at once the gen'rous train com-  
 plies, 115

Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.  
 The work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,  
 By night revers'd the labours of the day.  
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,  
 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ;  
 Unheard, unseen, three Years her arts prevail ; 121  
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.  
 We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,  
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.  
 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils ; 125  
 A wond'rous monument of female wiles !

But you, oh Peers ! and thou, oh Prince ! give  
 ear

(I speak aloud, that every *Greek* may hear)  
 Dismiss the Queen ; and if her sire approves,  
 Let him espouse her to the Peer she loves : 130

Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,  
 Nor let a race of Princes wait in vain.  
 Tho' with a grace divine her soul is blest,  
 And all *Minerva* breathes within her breast, 134  
 In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd,  
 And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd;  
 Tho' *Tyro* nor *Mycene* match her Name,  
 Nor great *Alcmena* (the proud boasts of Fame)  
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree  
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee : 140  
 With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,  
 'Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.  
 What tho' from pole to pole resounds her name !  
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame :  
 For 'till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145  
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.

§. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] *Eustathius* observes, that *Antinous*, in the opening of his Speech, throws the fault upon *Penelope*, to engage the favour of the multitude : but being conscious that he had said things which *Penelope* would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both *Penelope* and the multitude his friends.

While yet he speaks, *Telemachus* replies.

Ev'n Nature starts, and what ye ask denies.

§. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] *Telemachus* every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit; this speech is a testimony of it, as well as his former; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of *Penelope*, says it would be an offence against Heaven and Earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells *Antinous* that such a word, *μῦθος*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The Criticks have found fault with one part of the Speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in *Telemachus*.

How to *Icarius*, in the bridal hour,

Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?

They think it unworthy of *Telemachus* to make the Dower of *Penelope* an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀποτίμω*, and then the sense runs thus; "I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nursed me in my infancy, while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead; besides, hard would be the Punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily send away *Penelope* to *Icarius*."

*Dacier* dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those Ages, to justify her opinion: if a son forced away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: but if she retired voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remained with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of *Dacier* may be confirmed from *Demosthenes* in his orations, *ἐν μὲν ταῦτα, ἀνδρὶ αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντι, ἀποδιδῶναι τὸν οἶκον, ἐν κομισαμένη τὴν πορϋκα*. Afterwards upon the decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back her portion, &c. The same author adds, that the reason why the Suitors are so urgent to send away *Penelope*, is, that she may chuse to marry some one of

Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,  
 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years?  
 While sad on foreign shores *Ulysses* treads, 151  
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades;  
 How to *Icarius* in the bridal hour  
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?  
 How from my father should I vengeance dread?  
 How would my mother curse my hated head? 156

them, rather than return to *Icarius*; so that *Telemachus* only takes hold of their argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. They addressed *Penelope* more for the sake of her riches than her beauty, (for she must be about forty years old) and he tells them, that if he sends her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of *Penelope*. This I confess is very refined; and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in *Telemachus*, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, viz. an abhorrence of their riots, described by *Telemachus* to have arisen to such a degree as to have almost ruined his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the Poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of *Ulysses*.

\*. 155. *How from my father should I vengeance dread?*] There is an ambiguity in the word *Father*; it may either signify *Icarius* or *Ulysses*, as *Eustathius* observes: but I think the context determines the person of *Ulysses*; for *Telemachus* believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to *Penelope*.

And while in wrath to vengeful Fiends she  
cries,

How from their hell would vengeful Fiends arise?

Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,

The earth's disgrace, and Humankind my foe. 160

If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?

Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away :

†. 157. *And while in wrath to vengeful Fiends she cries,  
How from their hell would vengeful Fiends arise ?]*

In the ninth *Iliad* we are told that the father of *Phœnix* imprecated the Furies against his son.

My fire with curses loads my hated head,  
And cries, " Ye Furies ! barren be his bed."  
Infernal *Jove*, the vengeful Fiends below,  
And ruthless *Proserpine*, confirm'd his vow.

In the same book the Furies hear the curses of *Althea* upon her son,

She beat the ground, and call'd the Pow'rs beneath,  
On her own son to wreak her brother's death.  
Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,  
And the fell Fiends who walk the nightly round.

These passages shew the opinion the Ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believed there were Furies particularly commissioned to punish those who failed in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against them by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see *Telemachus* is full of the sense of it. *Dacier*.

Waste in wild riot what your land allows,  
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.  
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165  
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed;  
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!  
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,  
 (A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,  
 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170  
 With that, two Eagles from a mountain's height  
 By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;

§. 171, &c. *The Prodigy of the two Eagles,*] This prodigy is ushered in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The Eagles are *Ulysses* and *Telemachus*: By Jove's command they fly from a mountain's height: this denotes that the two Heroes are inspired by *Jupiter*, and come from the country to the destruction of the Suitors: the eagles fly *with wing to wing conjoin'd*; this shews, that they act in concert and unity of councils: at first they *float upon the wind*; this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those Heroes: at last they *clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies*; this shews the violence of the assault: *With ardent eyes the rival train they threat*. This, as the Poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the Suitors. *Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly, Full tow'rd the East*; this signifies that the Suitors alone are not doomed to destruction, but that the men of *Ithaca* are involved in danger, as *Halitherses* interprets it.

Nor to the Great alone is death decreed;

We, and our guilty *Ithaca* must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious! *Eustathius, verbatim.*

Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,  
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.  
 Above th' assembled Peers they wheel on high, 175  
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;  
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,  
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.  
 They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and neck they  
     rend,

And from their plumes huge drops of blood de-  
     scend : 180

Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly  
 Full tow'rd the East, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring Rivals gaze with cares oppress'd,  
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.

'Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185

The Prince of Augurs, *Halitherses*, rose :

Prefcient he view'd th' aërial tracks, and drew

A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of *Ithaca*, give ear,

Hear all ! but chiefly you, oh Rivals ! hear. 190

Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends ;

*Ulysses* comes, and death his steps attends.

Nor to the Great alone is death decreed ;  
 We, and our guilty *Ithaca* must bleed. 194  
 Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay ?  
 Be humbled all, and lead, ye Great ! the way.  
 For lo ! my words no fancy'd woes relate :  
 I speak from science, and the voice is Fate.

When great *Ulysses* fought the *Phrygian* shores  
 To shake with war proud *Ilion's* lofty tow'rs, 200  
 Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold :  
 Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds be-  
 hold.

I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train ;  
 I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main ;

§. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes ———*  
*I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]*

In three lines (observes *Eusebnius*) the Poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in Miniature : and it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. *Aristotle* observes the simplicity of *Homer's* platform ; which is no more than this : a Prince is absent from his country ; *Neptune* destroys his companions ; in his absence his family is disordered by many Princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son ; but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the Suitors, and re-establishes his affairs : this is all that is essential to the Poem, the rest of it is made up of Episodes. And yet with what miracles of Poetry (*speciosa miracula*, as *Horace* styles them) has he furnished out his Poem ?



How twice ten years from shore to shore he  
 roams ; 205

Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes !

To whom *Eurymachus* —— Fly, Dotard, fly !  
 With thy wife dreams, and fables of the sky.

Go prophesy at home ; thy sons advise :

Here thou art sage in vain — I better read the  
 skies. 210

Unnumber'd Birds glide thro' th' ærial way,

Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.

Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below

*Ulysses* lies : oh wert thou laid as low !

Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215

Nor fire to rage *Telemachus*'s breast.

From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,

And Int'rest, not the God, thy voice inspires.

†. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.*] It has been observed, that *Homer* is the father of Oratory as well as Poetry, and it must be confessed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his Poetry. The *Invective*, *Persuasive*, *Ironical*, &c. may all be gathered from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of *Eurymachus* : he is to decry the credit of the predictions of *Halitherses* : he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal Prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring *Halitherses* into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.

His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age  
 Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220  
 Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,  
 And but augment the wrongs thou would'st redress.

*Telemachus* may bid the Queen repair  
 To great *Icarius*, whose paternal care  
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225  
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.  
 'Till she retires, determin'd we remain,  
 And both the Prince and Augur threat in vain:  
 His pride of words, and thy wild dream of Fate,  
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230  
 Threat on, oh Prince! elude the bridal day,  
 Threat on, 'till all thy stores in waste decay.  
 True, *Greece* affords a train of lovely dames,  
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames:  
 But never from this nobler suit we cease; 235  
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the Youth. Since then in vain I  
 tell

My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.

But heav'n, and all the *Greeks*, have heard my  
wrongs :

To heav'n, and all the *Greeks*, redress belongs. 240

Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain)

A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main ;

The realms of *Pyle* and *Sparta* to explore,

And seek my royal fire from shore to shore :

If, or to *Fame* his doubtful fate be known, 245

Or to be learn'd from *Oracles* alone ?

If yet he lives ; with patience I forbear,

'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year :

But if already wand'ring in the train

Of empty shades ; I measure back the main, 250

†. 239. — *All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.*] It is necessary for the Reader to carry in his mind, that this Assembly consists not only of the Peers, but of the people of *Ithaca* : for to the people *Telemachus* here appeals.

It is evident, that the place of the Assembly was at least open to the Air in the upper parts : for otherways how should the Eagles be visible to the Suitors ? and so very plainly, as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes ? There was no doubt a place set apart for Council, usually in the market : for *Telemachus* is said to seat himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book : but *Ulysses* had been absent twenty years ; and therefore it is evident, that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in *Athens*, and other cities of *Greece*, there were *Βουλευτήρια*, publick Halls for the consultation of affairs.

Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,  
And yield his comfort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd ; and while abash'd the Peers attend,  
*Mentor* arose, *Ulysses'* faithful friend :

[When fierce in arms he sought the scenes of  
war, 255

“ My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care ;

“ Years roll'd on years my God-like fire decay,

“ Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.”]

‡. 254. *Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend.*] The name of *Mentor* is another instance of the gratitude of our Poet's temper, it being the same which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in *Ithaca*, during a defluxion on his eyes which seized him in his voyages : and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this Poem. This character of *Mentor* is well sustained by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young *Telemachus* on all occasions.

‡. 258. *Guard thou my Sire, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, “ *Obeys the old man.*” *Eustathius* rightly determines, that the expression means *Laertes*. The Poet loses no opportunity of giving *Ulysses* an excellent character ; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the Suitors.

— — — — “ *Servetur ad imum*

“ *Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi constet.*”

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the Poem ; and when the Poet in the unravelling of his Fable comes to reward and punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the Suitors, and re-establishment of *Ulysses*.

Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,  
 That flash'd with rage; and as he spoke, he  
                   frown'd, 260

O never, never more! let King be just,  
 Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust!  
 Let Tyrants govern with an iron rod,  
 Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God;  
 Since he who like a father held his reign, 265  
 So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain!  
 True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I  
                   share;

Yet now the Rivals are my smallest care:  
 They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,  
 E'er long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price. 270  
 But against you, ye *Greeks*! ye coward train,  
 Gods! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain?  
 Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords  
 His injur'd Prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, *Leocritus* rejoin'd: 275  
 O pride of words, and arrogance of mind!  
 Would'st thou to rise in arms the *Greeks* advise?  
 Join all your pow'rs! in arms, ye *Greeks*, arise!

Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose ;

The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280

Should great *Ulysses* stern appear in arms,

While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms ;

Tho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,

Torn from her breast, that hour, *Ulysses* dies.

§. 282. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity: it says, *καὶ Δαυτὶ*: or, in the time of the banquet. *Eustathius* interprets it, *τὸ οἶνον φαλκίζουσιν αὐτοῖς*, *The Wine as it were fighting on their side*; and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of *Ithaca* from rising in the cause of *Ulysses*: *Mentor* speaks justly; *Leocritus* insolently; *Mentor* sets before them the worth of *Ulysses*; *Leocritus* the power of the Suitors: *Mentor* speaks like a brave man; *Leocritus* (observes *Eustathius*) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of several Suitors; they are all described as insolent voluptuaries. But though they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons: thus *Antinous* derides, *Eurymachus* covers villainy with mildness; *Antinous* is ever the foremost in outrage, *Eurymachus* generally his second: a greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the Poet is to describe, is the insolence of the Suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom; he is obliged to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design: and consequently that general resemblance of their characters is not a fault in the Poet.

But hence retreating to your domes repair ; 285

To arm the vefſel, *Mentor* ! be thy care,

And *Halitberſes* ! thine : be each his friend ;

Ye lov'd the father : go, the ſon attend.

But yet, I truſt, the boafter means to ſtay

Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a ruſhing ſound, th' *Assembly*  
bend,

Diverſe their ſteps : the rival rout aſcend

The royal dome ; while ſad the Prince explores

The neighb'ring main, and forrowing treads the  
ſhores.

There, as the waters o'er his hands he ſhed, 295

The royal ſuppliant to *Minerva* pray'd.

\*. 291. *Then, with a ruſhing ſound, &c.*] The *Assembly* which was convened by *Telemachus*, is broke up in a riotous manner by *Leocritus*, who had no right to diſſolve it. This agrees with the lawleſs ſtate of the country in the abſence of its King, and ſhews (ſays *Euſtathius*) that the Suitors had uſurped the chief Authority.

There is a fine contraſt between the behaviour of *Telemachus* and that of the Suitors. They return to repeat their diſorders and debauches ; *Telemachus* retires to ſuppllicate the Goddeſs of Wiſdom, to aſſiſt him in his enterpriſes. Thus the Poet raiſes the character of *Telemachus* ; he has ſhewed him to be a youth of a brave ſpirit, a good Speaker, and here repreſents him as a perſon of piety.

O Goddess! who descending from the skies  
 Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,  
 By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,  
 And seek my fire thro' storms and rolling seas! 300  
 Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid!  
 Descend once more, propitious to my aid.  
 Without thy presence, vain is thy command;  
 Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the Goddess took 305  
 Sage *Mentor's* form, and thus like *Mentor* spoke.

O Prince, in early youth divinely wise,  
 Born, the *Ulysses* of thy age to rise!  
 If to the son the father's worth descends,  
 O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends: 310  
 To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,  
 And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.  
 Were not wise sons descendent of the wise,  
 And did not Heroes from brave Heroes rise; 314

‡. 307. *The speech of Minerva.*] This speech of *Minerva* is suited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to suffer himself to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She sets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there was never any danger which he durst not encounter; if he should suffer himself to be discouraged, he would prove himself an unworthy son of a brave Father. *Dacier. Eustathius.*



Vain were my hopes : few sons attain the praise  
 Of their great fires, and most their fires disgrace.  
 But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,  
 And all *Penelope* thy soul inspires :  
 Go, and succeed ! the rivals aims despise ;  
 For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320  
 Blind they rejoice, tho' now, ev'n now they fall ;  
 Death hastes amain : one hour o'erwhelms them  
 all !

And lo, with speed we plough the wat'ry way ;  
 My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey :  
 The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325  
 Thro' seas and realms companion of thy care.  
 Thou to the court ascend ; and to the shores  
 (When night advances) bear the naval stores ;  
 Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,  
 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow  
 flies.

Meanwhile the Mariners by my command 331  
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.  
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides ;  
 The best I chuse to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke : to his high dome the Prince re-  
turns, 335

And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns.

'Twas riot all, among the lawless train ;

Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.

Arriv'd, his hand the gay *Antinous* preſt,

And thus deriding, with a ſmile addreſt. 340

Grieve not, oh daring Prince ! that noble  
heart ;

Ill ſuits gay youth the ſtern heroick part.

‡. 341. *Antinous's ſpeech.*] This ſpeech muſt be underſtood ironically : ἔγωγε τῇ ἰππῳ τῇ is uſed as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of *Telemachus* to the people, and his intended voyage ; by way of deriſion *Antinous* bids him not trouble his brave Spirit in contriving any more Orationſ, or in any bold attempt to find out *Ulyſſes* ; or to act the Orator, or Hero's part.

The Criticks have almoſt generally condemned theſe pieces of gaiety and railery, as unworthy of heroick Poetry : if ever they are proper, they muſt be ſo in the mouths of theſe Suitors ; perſons of no ſerious or noble characters : mirth, wine and feaſting is their conſtant employment ; and conſequently if they fall into abſurdities, they act ſuitably to their characters. *Milton*, the beſt and greateſt imitator of *Homer*, has followed him unworthily in this reſpect ; I mean, has debaſed even this low railery into greater lowneſs, by playing upon words and ſyllables. But in this place the railery is not without its effect, by ſhewing the utmoſt contempt of *Telemachus* ; and ſurely it is the loweſt degree of calamity to be at once oppreſſed and deſpiſed.

Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,  
 Leave thought to Age, and drain the flowing  
     bowl.

Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345  
 The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the Prince) for mirth a time?  
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;  
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;  
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350  
 Suffice it to have spent with swift decay

The wealth of Kings, and made my youth a prey.  
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,

And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,  
 Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355

Here, or in *Pyle* — in *Pyle*, or here, your foe.

Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;

A private voyager I pass the main.

Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,  
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to  
     stay,

Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they }  
 feast, }  
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest, }  
 And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365 }  
 Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward  
 fly,

Doom'd by the stern *Telemachus* to die?  
 To *Pyle* or *Sparta* to demand supplies,  
 Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:  
 Or comes from *Ephyre* with poisons fraught, 370  
 And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)  
 But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,  
 He, like his fire, may sink depriv'd of breath,  
 And punish us unkindly by his death? 375  
 What mighty labours would he then create,  
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,

y. 368. *To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.*] It is observable, says *Eustathius*, that the Poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the Suitors, but he rejects them, and chuses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the Histories of *Sparta* and *Pylus*. This has a double effect; it furnishes the Poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of *Ulysses* and *Telemachus*.

The royal Palace to the Queen convey,  
Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

Meantime the lofty rooms the Prince surveys,  
Where lay the treasures of th' *Ithacian* race: 381

ψ. 378. *The royal Palace to the Queen convey.*] The Suitors allot the Palace to *Penelope*: it being, says *Eustathius*, the only thing that they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the Suitors, concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of *Ulysses*, shews the wealth and abundance of that Hero. *Dacier* has found out an allusion between, φέρω in the first speech, and πέρω in the second; they differing only in one letter: she calls this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only Commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have no relation; they stand at a sufficient distance; and I believe *Homer* would have thought such trifling unworthy of his Poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascribed (in this case, as in many others) to the Commentator, and not the Author.

ψ. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such passages as these have ever furnished Criticks with matter of railery; they think such household cares unworthy of a King, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a Poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the Reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the *Iliad* is chiefly suitable to the condition of Kings and Heroes; and consequently filled with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind can have no concern or interest: the *Odyssey* is of more general use; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the

Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd ;  
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd ;  
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume ;  
 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385  
 (Pure flav'rous wine, by Gods in bounty giv'n,  
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)

Untouch'd they stood, 'till his long labours o'er  
 The great *Ulysses* reach'd his native shore.

A double strength of bars secur'd the gates : 390  
 Fast by the door the wife *Euryclea* waits ;  
*Euryclea*, who, great *Ops* ! thy lineage shar'd,  
 And watch'd all night, all day ; a faithful guard.

To whom the Prince. O thou, whose guardian

care

394

Nurs'd the most wretched King that breathes the air ;

sufferings of *Ulysses* in some degree home to ourselves, and make his condition our own ; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of *Agamemnon* or *Achilles* ? What I would infer from this is, that the Reader ought not to take offence at any such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the *Iliad*, *Achilles*, when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as an Hero, is liable to the same objection. But if the manners of the ancient ages be considered, we shall be reconciled to the actions of the ancient Heroes ; and consequently to *Homer*.

ψ. 394. — — — O thou, whose guardian care

Nurs'd the most wretched King — ]

Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand,  
 'Till great *Ulysses* views his native land.  
 But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,  
 Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd ;  
 And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400  
 Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning hour.  
 For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,  
 And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,  
 Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,  
 To seek *Ulysses* thro' the wat'ry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,  
 And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.  
 Oh whither, whither flies my son ? she cry'd,  
 To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide ?  
 In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410  
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.

*Euryclea* was not properly the Nurse of *Telemachus*, but of *Ulysses*; so that she is called so not in a strict sense, but as one concerned in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. *Telemachus* here reserves the best wines for *Ulysses*; a lesson (observes *Eustathius*) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly-trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.

The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,  
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die!  
 Then stay, my child! storms beat, and rolls the  
                     main; 414

Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain!  
     Far hence (reply'd the Prince) thy fears be driv'n:  
 Heav'n calls me forth; these counsels are of  
                     heav'n.

But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, swear,  
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,  
 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420  
 'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day:  
 Left the sad tale a mother's life impair,  
 And grief destroy what time a-while would spare.

ψ. 421. *'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable, (if possible) that the departure of *Telemachus* could be concealed twelve days from the knowledge of so fond a mother as *Penelope*? It must be allowed, that this would not be possible, except in a time of such great disorder as the Suitors created: *Penelope* confined herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appeared publicly; so that there is no improbability in this relation. *Dacier*.

*Eustathius* makes a criticism upon the words ἀρκύνει and ἰσχυρύνει, the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively; namely, the former in swearing *not to perform* a thing, the latter *to perform it*.



Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes  
 Attests th' all-seeing Sov'reign of the skies. 425  
 Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,  
 The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.  
 While to the rival train the Prince returns,  
 The martial Goddess with impatience burns ;  
 Like thee, *Telemachus*, in voice and size, 430  
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,  
 She bids the Mariners prepar'd, to stand,  
 When Night descends, embody'd on the strand.  
 Then to *Noemon* swift she runs, she flies,  
 And asks a bark : the chief a bark supplies. 435

†. 432. *She bids the Mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of *Minerva* preparing the Mariners, &c. is thus to be understood : the men of *Ithaca* retaining in memory the speech of *Telemachus*, and believing that what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice ; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts, voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance : so that *Minerva* is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person's own Reason that induced him to assist *Telemachus*. *Eustathius*.

†. 435. *Noemon — the bark supplies.*] It may be asked why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant ? The answer is, that a great deal depends upon this particularity ; no less than the discovery of the voyage of *Telemachus* to the Suitors ; and consequently, whatever the Suitors act in order to intercept him, takes its rise from this little incident ; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of Poetry flows from it.

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,  
 Down sunk the Sun behind the western hills.  
 The Goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,  
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.  
 Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440  
 It rides; and now descends the sailor-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,  
 With rapid step the Goddess urg'd her way:  
 There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,  
 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445  
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,  
 Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

†. 444. *There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound.*]  
 The words in the original are *ὑπνός* and *ἴπνοσ*, which are not  
 to be taken for being *asleep*, but *drowsy*; this is evident from  
 the usage of *καθυπνός*, in the conclusion of the first book of the  
*Iliad*, where the signification has been mistaken by most trans-  
 lators: they make *Jupiter* there to be asleep; though two lines  
 afterwards, in the second book, *Homer* expressly says,

Th' immortals slumber'd on their thrones above:  
 All, but the ever-waking eyes of *Jove*.

It may be asked how *Minerva* can be said to occasion this  
 drowsiness in the Suitors, and make them retire sooner than  
 usual? *Eustathius* replies, that the person who furnished the  
 wine supplied it in greater quantities than ordinary, through  
 which wine they contracted a drowsiness: in this sense *Min-  
 erva*, or wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of *Te-  
 lemachus*.

Then thus, in *Mentor's* rev'rend form array'd,  
Spoke to *Telemachus* the Martial Maid.

Lo! on the seas, prepar'd the vessel stands, 450

Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.

Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;

The footsteps of the Deity he treads.

Swift to the shore they move: along the strand

The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

He bids them bring their stores; th' attending  
train

Load the tall bark, and lanch into the main.

The Prince and Goddess to the stern ascend;

To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.

Full from the West she bids fresh breezes blow;

The fable billows foam and roar below. 461

The chief his orders gives; th' obedient band

With due observance wait the chief's com-  
mand;

†. 460. — — — *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but Poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the Goddess of Wisdom. *Eustathius*.

With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind  
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465  
High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails  
Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;  
The crooked keel the parting surge divides,  
And to the stern retreating roll the tides.

And now they ship their oars, and crown with  
wine 470

The holy Goblet to the Pow'rs divine :

§. 464. *With speed the mast they rear.*] It is observable, that *Homer* never passes by an opportunity of describing the sea, or a ship under sail; and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it: I take the reason to be, not only because it furnished him with variety of poetical images, but because he himself having made frequent voyages, had a full Idea of it, and consequently was delighted with it: this is evident from his conduct in the *Iliad*, where variety of allusions and similitudes are drawn from the Sea, and are not the smallest ornaments of his Poetry.

§. 470. — — — *And crown with wine  
The holy Goblet to the Pow'rs divine.*]

This custom of libations was frequent upon all solemn occasions, before meat, before sleep, voyages, journies, and in all religious rites, sacrifices, &c. They were always made with wine, pure and unmixed, whence ἀπαλὸς is a word frequent in ancient Authors. Sometimes they used mixed wines in sacrifices; but *Eusebius* says, that this mixture was of wine with water, and not of wine with water; hence came the distinction of ἐσπονδὸν and ἀσπονδὸν, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmixed was lawful, the mixed unlawful. *Homer* in

Imploring all the Gods that reign above,  
But chief, the blue-ey'd Progeny of *Jove*.

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,  
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

this place uses *ἐπιεφίας κρήνηρας*, or *Goblets crowned with wine*; that is, filled till the wine stood above the brim of the Goblet; they esteemed it an irreverence to the Gods not to fill the cups full, for then only they esteemed the libation *whole* and *perfect*, ὅλον καὶ τέλειον.

This Book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning; the speeches in the Council, with the preparations for the voyage of *Telemachus*, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finished by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that *Ithaca* was distant from *Pylus* but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the Sun, in carrying the provisions from the Palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of *Telemachus* and his friends against those of the Suitors. It shews the great judgment of the Poet in chusing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects, and know from what spring every action flowed: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident; the speeches are as it were the ground-work upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of *Telemachus*.

In the *Iliad*, after the dissolution of the Council in the first book, and the dissension between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*, we immediately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the *Odyssey*, after the Poet has laid before us the warm debates between the Suitors and *Telemachus*, we immediately expect them to act as enemies: the war is declared, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus *Homer* adds the perspicuity of History to the ornaments of Poetry.





THE  
THIRD BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.



## The A R G U M E N T.

### The Interview of *Telemachus* and *Nestor*.

**T**HELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what past in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the Suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an Eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the Palace. The next morning they sacrifice a Bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.

*The Scene lies on the Sea-shore of Pylos.*





THE  
\* THIRD BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.

THE sacred Sun, above the waters rais'd,  
Thro' Heav'n's eternal, brazen portals  
blaz'd;

And wide o'er earth diffus'd his chearing ray,  
To Gods and men to give the golden day.

\* The scene is now removed from *Ithaca* to *Pylos*, and with it a new vein of Poetry is opened: instead of the riots of the Suitors, we are entertained with the wisdom and piety of *Nestor*. This and the following book are a kind of Supplement to the *Iliad*; the nature of Epick Poetry requires that something should be left to the Imagination of the Reader, nor is the picture to be intirely drawn at full length. *Homer*

Now on the coast of *Pyle* the vessel falls, 5  
Before old *Neleus*' venerable walls.

There, suppliant to the Monarch of the flood,  
At nine green Theatres the *Pyliaus* stood,

therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of *Troy*. This conduct also shews his art: variety gives life and delight; and it is much more necessary in Epick than in Comick or Tragick Poetry, sometimes to shift the Scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the Poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a too remote country, (for this destroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant) so in Epick Poetry, every removal must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the Poet carries his Hero no farther than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had still dwelt upon the disorders of the Suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his Poem: by this method we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloyed, but satisfied.

§. 2. *Thro' Heav'n's eternal, brazen portals* —] The original calls Heaven *πολύχαλκον*, or *brazen*; the reason of it arises either from the Palaces of the Gods being built of brass by *Vulcan*; or rather the word implies no more than the Stability of Heaven, which in other places is called *ἑρμηνεύον*, or *framed of iron*. *Eustathius*.

§. 8. *At nine green Theatres*.] It may be asked why the Poet is so very particular as to mention that the *Pyliaus* were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? *Eustathius* answers from the Ancients,

Each held five hundred, (a deputed train)  
 At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain. 10  
 They taste the entrails, and the altars load  
 With smoking thighs, an off'ring to the God.  
 Full for the port the *Ithacensians* stand,  
 And furl their sails, and issue on the land.

that there were nine cities subject to the power of *Nestor*: five in *Pylos*, the rest in *Bœotia*; the Poet therefore allots one Bank or Theatre to every city, which consisted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thousand five hundred: these cities furnished the like complement of men to *Nestor* for the war at *Troy*: he sailed in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice, every city furnished nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

§. 8. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] This was a very solemn sacrifice of the *Pylians*: how comes it then to pass, that *Homer* passes it over in one line? *Eustathius* answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and *Homer* knows when to speak, and when to be silent. He chuses to carry on the adventures of *Telemachus*, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute nothing to the story; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

§. 11. *They taste the entrails.*] That is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in *Homer* that shews where this sacrifice was offered, whether in a Temple, or in the open air. But *Eustathius* tells us from *Strabo*, that it was in the Temple of *Samian Neptune*, ἡ ἱερὴ Σαμῶς Ποσειδάωνος.

*Telemachus* already prest the shore ; 15  
 Not first, the Pow'r of Wisdom march'd before,

And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,  
 Admonish'd thus his well attending mind.

Proceed, my son ! this youthful shame expel ;  
 An honest business never blush to tell. 20

To learn what Fates thy wretched fire detain,  
 We past the wide, immeasurable main.

Meet then the Senior far renown'd for sense,  
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence :

Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ; 25  
 And sure he will : for Wisdom never lies.

Oh tell me, *Mentor* ! tell me, faithful guide,  
 (The youth with prudent modesty reply'd)

§. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ;  
 And sure he will : for Wisdom never lies.*]

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed : the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. *Homer* in many places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a Lie. This verse is twice repeated in the present book, as in some others ; and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of *Achilles* in the ninth *Iliad* :

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,  
 My heart detests him as the gates of hell.

How shall I meet, or how accost the Sage,  
Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age? 30  
Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,  
To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the Martial Goddess thus rejoin'd.  
Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting  
mind;

And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35  
Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.  
For nought unprosp'rous shall thy ways attend,  
Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

\*. 38. *Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.*]  
There is some obscurity in the *Greek* expression, and the ancient Criticks have made it more obscure by their false interpretations; they imagine that the Poet only meant to say, that *Telemachus* was the legitimate son of *Penelope* and *Ulysses*. *Eustathius*.

*Dacier* very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of *Homer*; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation, viz. "You were not born in despite of the Gods; that is, you are well made, and of a good presence, you have good inclinations, and in a word, your birth is happy." She explains *τρεφόμενος* after the same manner. "You were not educated in despite of the Gods;" that is, "the Gods have blessed your education." This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of *Minerva*; which was to give a decent assurance to *Telemachus*: you are a person, says the Goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before *Nestor*?

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :  
 As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led ; 40  
 And join'd the band before the sacred fire,  
 Where sat, encompast with his sons, the Sire.  
 The youth of *Pylos*, some on pointed wood  
 Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.  
 In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45  
 Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.  
*Pisistratus* was first, to grasp their hands,  
 And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;

§. 48. *And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands.*] It is with great pleasure that I read such passages in an Author of so great antiquity, as are pictures of the simplicity of those heroick ages: it is the remark of *Eustathius*, that *Pisistratus* the son of a King does not seat these strangers upon purple Tapestry, or any other costly furniture, but upon the skins of beasts, that had nothing to recommend them but their softness; being spread upon the sand of the sea-shores.

This whole passage pleases me extremely; there is a spirit of true Devotion, Morality and good Sense in it; and the decency of behaviour between *Nestor* and *Telemachus* is described very happily: *Nestor* shews great benevolence to *Telemachus*; *Telemachus* great reverence to *Nestor*: the modesty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our observation. We see the same picture of *Nestor* in the *Odyssey*, that was drawn of him in the *Iliad*, with this only difference, that there he was a Counsellor of War, here he is painted in softer colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffusing a spirit of piety through his whole territories. He had now survived the war of *Troy* almost ten years; and the Gods reward the old age of this wise and religious Prince with peace and happiness.

Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,  
Where *Nestor* sat with youthful *Thrasymed*. 50

To each a portion of the feast he bore,  
And held a golden goblet foaming o'er ;  
Then first approaching to the elder guest,  
The latent Goddess in these words address.

Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep  
These rites of *Neptune*, Monarch of the deep, 56  
Thee first it fits, oh stranger ! to prepare  
The due libation and the solemn pray'r :

Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine :  
Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine, }  
He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine : 61 }

For all mankind alike require their grace,  
All born to want ; a miserable race !

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the  
bowl :

A secret pleasure touch'd *Athena's* soul, 65  
To see the pref'rence due to sacred age  
Regarded ever by the just and sage.  
Of Ocean's King she then implores the grace.  
Oh thou ! whose arms this ample globe embrace,

Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70

On *Nestor* first, and *Nestor's* royal line ;

Next grant the *Pylian* states their just desires,

Pleas'd with their Hecatomb's ascending fires ;

Last deign *Telemachus* and me to bless,

And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

Thus she; and having paid the rite divine,

Gave to *Ulysses'* son the rosy wine.

Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims drest

They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.

The banquet done, the Narrative old man, 80

Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.

Now, gentle guests ! the genial banquet o'er,

It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,

\*. 74. *Last, deign Telemachus and me to bless* —] Since *Minerva* here mentions the name of *Telemachus* in her prayer; how comes it to pass, that *Nestor* is at a loss to know *Telemachus*? *Minerva* sat close by *Nestor*; he must therefore be supposed to hear the prayer; and yet in the following lines he enquires who these strangers are? We can scarce imagine *Nestor* ignorant that the son of *Ulysses* was named *Telemachus*, there being so strict a friendship between *Nestor* and *Ulysses*. Perhaps therefore *Minerva* prayed in secret mentally; or perhaps *Nestor* might not take notice of what was not address'd immediately to him, and consequently make inquiry about it for the greater certainty.



And whence your race ? on what adventure, say,  
 Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way ? 85  
 Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,  
 Engage your journey o'er the pathless main :  
 Where savage Pirates seek thro' seas unknown  
 The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

Urg'd by the precepts by the Goddess giv'n, 90  
 And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,  
 The Youth, whom *Pallas* destin'd to be wise  
 And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.

γ. 86. *Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of persons and actions in ancient times, from the images of persons and actions in modern ages, we shall fall into great mistakes: thus in the present passage, if we annex the same idea of Piracy, as it was practised three thousand years past, to Piracy as it is practised in our ages; what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of *Nestor*? But, says *Eustathius*, Piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but *Thucydides* had this passage in view, when he says, that the ancient Poets introduce men inquiring of those who frequent the sea, if they be Pirates, as a thing no way ignominious. *Thucydides* tells us in the same place, that all those who lived on the sea-coast, or in the Islands, maintained themselves by frequent inroads upon unfortified towns, and if such piracies were nobly performed, they were accounted glorious. *Herodotus* also writes, that many of the Ancients, especially about *Thrace*, thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground, but to live by piracy and plunder was esteemed a life of honour. *Eustathius*.

Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we  
came?

(Oh grace and glory of the *Grecian* name!) 95

From where high *Ithaca* o'erlooks the floods,  
Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent  
woods,

Us to these shores our filial duty draws,

A private sorrow, not a publick cause.

My fire I seek, where-e'er the voice of fame 100

Has told the glories of his noble name,

The great *Ulysses*; fam'd from shore to shore

For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.

Long time with thee before proud *Ilion's* wall

In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall. 105

Of all the chiefs, this Hero's fate alone

Has *Jove* reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;

Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,

Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?

Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110

Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.

If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,

Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear:

And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,  
 Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115  
 Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try  
 The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.  
 Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war  
 The wife, the good *Ulysses* claim'd thy care;  
 If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120  
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;  
 Far as thy mind thro' backward time can see,  
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory:  
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee. }

To him experienc'd *Nestor* thus rejoin'd. 125  
 O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?  
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,  
 And open all the wounds of *Greece* anew?

†. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] *Eustathius* observes the modesty of *Nestor*: *Telemachus* had ascribed the fall of *Troy* in a great measure to *Nestor*; but *Nestor* speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the *Greeks* as in the war, so in the glory of it. *Nestor* mentions the sufferings of the *Greeks* by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of *Troy*: to understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the *Greeks* made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the *Iliad*, particularly from what *Achilles* says in the ninth book.

What toils by sea ! where dark in quest of prey  
 Dauntless we rov'd ; *Achilles* led the way : 130  
 What toils by land ! where mixt in fatal fight  
 Such numbers fell, such Heroes sunk to night :  
 There *Ajax* great, *Achilles* there the brave,  
 There wise *Patroclus*, fill an early grave :  
 There too my son — ah once my best delight, 135  
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,  
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,  
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind :

§. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observed, that the Poet inserts into the *Odyssey* several incidents that happened after the fall of *Troy*, and by that method agreeably diversifies his Poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. *Eustathius* remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the Heroes he mentions, except only to *Achilles*. *Achilles* had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the *Greeks* by his Anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey *Agamemnon* ; therefore while *Nestor* is lamenting the calamities of the *Greeks*, he passes over *Achilles* without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical : one may as well say *Achilles* needed no Epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of *Antilochus* : the father enlarges upon the fame of the son ; he gives him four epithets of glory ; and while *Ajax* is only praised as a warrior, *Antilochus* is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. *Longinus* has observed upon the beauty of this passage.

*Antilochus* — what more can I relate?

How trace the tedious series of our fate? 140

Not added years on years my task could close,

The long historian of my country's woes:

Back to thy native Islands might'st thou sail,

And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.

Nine painful years on that detested shore; 145

What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?

Still lab'ring on, 'till scarce at last we found

Great *Jove* propitious, and our conquest crown'd.

Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,

In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150

Art thou the son of that illustrious fire?

With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.

†. 149. *Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.*] *Nestor* speaks of *Ulysses* as an inseparable friend; and it shews an excellent disposition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of *Nestor* is remarkable; he first gives the character to *Ulysses* of being superiour in wisdom to all the *Greeks*; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him: — we ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments; which though it may imply that they were of equal wisdom, yet there is room left for it to signify, that *Ulysses* always assented to the wisdom of *Nestor*. *Eu-  
stathius*.

So like your voices, and your words so wise,  
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.  
 Thy Sire and I were one ; nor vary'd ought 155  
 In publick sentence, or in private thought ;  
 Alike to Council or th' Assembly came,  
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.  
 But when (by wisdom won) proud *Ilion* burn'd,  
 And in their ships the conqu'ring *Greeks* return'd ;  
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide, 161  
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride :  
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,  
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just)  
 Then *Discord*, sent by *Pallas* from above, 165  
 Stern Daughter of the great Avenger *Jove*,

§. 157. *The Council or the Assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between βουλή and ἀγορά. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council, the latter a publick assembly where all the people were present. *Eustathius*.

§. 165. *Sent by Pallas* —] *Nestor* in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the Goddess ; out of respect to *Ajax* the *Locrian*, who was then dead : the crime of *Ajax* was the violation of *Cassandra* even in the temple of *Minerva* before her image. But why should the Goddess be angry at others for the crime of *Ajax* ? This is because they omitted to punish the offender. If *Ajax* was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. *Eustathius*.

The Brother-Kings inspir'd with fell debate ;  
 Who call'd to council all th' *Achaian* state,  
 But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite  
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170  
 Nor Herald sworn the session to proclaim)  
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.

The crime of *Ajax* is mentioned in *Virgil*, *Æn.* i.

— — “ *Pallas* exurere classem

“ *Argivum*, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,

“ *Unius* ab noxam, & furias *Ajaci* *Oilei*?” &c.

Could angry *Pallas* with revengeful spleen

The *Grecian* navy burn, and drown the men ?

She for the fault of one offending foe,

The bolts of *Jove* himself presum'd to throw. *Dryd.*

*Virgil* borrowed the description of the punishment of *Ajax* from the fourth of the *Odyssey*.

γ. 168, &c. *Who call'd to council* —

*But call'd untimely, &c.*]

It may seem at first view, that the Poet affirms the night to be an improper season to convene a Council. This is not his meaning: in the *Iliad*, there are several councils by night; nay, *ἐν νυκτὶ βεβλή* is used proverbially to express the best concerted councils. What therefore *Nestor* here condemns is the calling not a select, but a publick assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence through wine, and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill chosen season: because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrained by night as by day. *Eustathius*.

To these the cause of meeting they explain,  
 And *Menelaus* moves to cross the main;  
 Not so the King of Men: he will'd to stay; 175  
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,  
 And calm *Minerva's* wrath. Oh blind to fate!  
 The Gods not lightly change their love, or hate.  
 With ire-full taunts each other they oppose,  
 'Till in loud tumult all the *Greeks* arose. 180  
 Now diff'rent counsels ev'ry breast divide,  
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side:  
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd;  
 (So *Jove*, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)  
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185  
 And brought our captives and our stores a-  
 board;  
 But half the people with respect obey'd  
 The King of Men, and at his bidding stay'd.

§. 177. *Oh blind to fate!*] It may be asked why *Nestor* condemns so solemnly this *Hero*, calling him Νήπιος, when he describes him in so pious an Action? This is not because the Gods are implacable, for as *Homer* himself writes, Στεγνὸν δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοῖς; but because he vainly imagined that they would so soon be appeased, without any Justice done upon the offender; Θεὸν ἑσθιῶς παλίντροπον are the words of *Eusebius*.



Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,  
(For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep) 190

For *Tenedos* we spread our eager oars,

There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs :

To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,

But angry *Jove* dispers'd our vows in air,

And rais'd new discord. Then (so Heav'n decreed) 195

*Ulysses* first and *Nestor* disagreed :

Wise as he was, by various Counsels sway'd,

He there, tho' late, to please the Monarch, stay'd.

But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,

Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods. 200

ψ. 197. *Wise as he was, by various Counsels sway'd,*

*He there, tho' late, to please the Monarch, stay'd.*]

It is with great address that *Nestor* relates the return of *Ulysses* to *Agamemnon*; he ascribes it not directly to *Ulysses*, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to *Telemachus*. But *Nestor*, according to *Dacier*, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please *Agamemnon*, but out of fear of the Goddess *Minerva*, whose statue he had taken by force from *Troy*: to appease that Goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with *Agamemnon*. *Eustathius*.

ψ. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods.*] It may be asked how *Nestor* attained this knowledge of the evils which the Gods were preparing? *Eustathius* ascribes it to his great Wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. *Dacier*

With us, *Tydidēs* fear'd, and urg'd his haste :  
 And *Menelaus* came, but came the last.  
 He join'd our vessels in the *Lesbian* bay,  
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way ;  
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205  
 (The safer road) beside the *Pfyrīan* isle ;  
 Or the straight course to rocky *Chios* plow,  
 And anchor under *Mimas'* shaggy brow ?  
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine :  
 The God propitious gave the guiding sign ; 210  
 Thro' the mid seas he bid our navy steers,  
 And in *Eubæa* shun the woes we fear.  
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky ;  
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,  
 With rapid swiftneſs cut the liquid way, 215  
 And reach *Gereſtus* at the point of day.  
 There hecatombs of bulls, to *Neptune* slain,  
 High-flaming please the Monarch of the main.  
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er  
*Tydidēs'* vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore : 220  
 with more reason tells us, that *Nestor* knew that *Minerva* had  
 been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punish-  
 ment was to be inflicted for the offence.

But I to *Pylos* scud before the gales,  
 The God still breathing on my swelling sails;  
 Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;  
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.  
 Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I sat, 225 }  
 And ask'd each voyager each Hero's fate; }  
 Curious to know, and willing to relate. }

Safe reach'd the *Myrmidons* their native land,  
 Beneath *Achilles'* warlike son's command.

†. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.*] *Eustathius* observes from the Antients, that the Poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off this relation of *Nestor*; by this method he has an opportunity to carry *Telemachus* to other countries, and insert into his Poem the story of *Menelaus* and *Helen*: this method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the Poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he sends *Telemachus* to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

†. 229. *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of *Achilles* was named *Neoptolemus*, by others *Pyrrhus*; his story is this: when he had reached *Theffaly* with the *Myrmidons* of *Achilles*, by the advice of *Thetis* he set fire to his vessels; and being warned by *Helenus*, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of *Epirus*, he found some persons fixing their spears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by *Andromache* the wife of *Hector*, he named him *Molossus*,

Those, whom the heir of great *Apollo's* art, 230  
 Brave *Philoctetes*, taught to wing the dart;  
 And those whom *Idomen* from *Ilion's* plain  
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.  
 How *Agamemnon* touch'd his *Argive* coast,  
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235  
 And how the Murd'rer paid his forfeit breath;  
 What lands so distant from that scene of death  
 But trembling heard the Fame? and heard, ad-  
 mire

How well the son appear'd his slaughter'd fire!  
 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240  
 Heav'n gives Posterity, t' avenge the deed.  
 So fell *Ægyſthus*; and may'st thou, my friend,  
 (On whom the virtues of thy fire descend)

from whom the region took the name of *Molossia*. From this country are the *Molossi canes*, mentioned by *Virgil*. *Eustathius*.

ŷ. 242. So fell *Ægyſthus*; and may'st thou, my friend, &c.] *Nestor* introduces the mention of *Ægyſthus* very artfully; it is to raise an emulation in *Telemachus* to revenge *Ulyſſes*, as *Orestes* had *Agamemnon*; it has the intended effect, and we find that *Telemachus* dwells upon his story with a virtuous envy; yet at the same time with great modesty; *Eustathius* gives a different reading in

— — — ἰσοπέποισι πῶλεσθαι, or  
 ἰσοπέποισιν ἀνδρῶν.

both the expressions are used in *Homer*, the preference is therefore submitted to the Reader.

Make future times thy equal act adore,  
And be what brave *Orestes* was before ! 245

The prudent youth reply'd. O thou the grace  
And lasting glory of the *Grecian* race !

Just was the vengeance, and to latest days  
Shall long posterity resound the praise. 249

Some God this arm with equal prowess blest !  
And the proud Suitors shall its force confess :  
Injurious men ! who while my soul is sore  
Of fresh Affronts, are meditating more.  
But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,  
Nor shall my father repossess the land : 255  
The father's fortune never to return,  
And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn !

Thus he ; and *Nestor* took the word : My son,  
Is it then true, as distant rumours run, 259  
That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms  
Thy Palace fill with insults and alarms ?  
Say, is the fault, thro' tame submission, thine ?  
Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,  
Mov'd by some Oracle, or voice divine ? }

γ. 264. *Mov'd by some Oracle, or voice divine ?*] The words  
in the original are, *following the voice of some God*, that is, some

And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265  
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state;  
 When great *Ulysses* shall suppress these harms,  
*Ulysses* singly, or all *Greece* in arms.

Oracle; *Homer* does not confine the expression either to a good or bad sense, but the context plainly shews, that they must be understood in a bad sense; namely to imply, that the people had recourse to pretended Oracles to justify their rebellion. This is evident from what follows, where *Nestor* encourages *Telemachus* to expect that *Ulysses* may punish them for their crimes, *ἀποτίσιμα ἔσθωσι* — if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.

ψ. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The Poet shews his great judgment in preparing the Reader for the destruction of the Suitors; that great Catastrophe is managed by few hands, and it might seem incredible that so few could destroy so many: the Poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of *Pallas*, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: it is by art, not strength, that *Ulysses* conquers.

*All Greece in arms.*

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the subjects of *Ulysses*, or even the *Pylions* and *Spartans*, but implies, that all the *Greeks* would rise in the cause of *Ulysses*. What the suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, that *Telemachus* was sailing to *Pyle* or *Sparta* for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice and not necessity that determined the Poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the Suitors. *Eustathius*.

It may be added, that the very nature of Epick Poetry, and of the *Odyssey* in particular, requires such a conduct: in the *Iliad*, *Achilles* is the chief agent, and performs almost all

But if *Athena*, War's triumphant maid,  
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270  
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care  
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war :  
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine  
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,  
 As those with which *Minerva* mark'd thy fire) 275  
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire !  
 Soon shou'd their hopes in humble dust be laid,  
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

Ah ! no such hope (the Prince with sighs re-  
 plies)

Can touch my breast ; that blessing heav'n denies.

the great actions ; *Aeneas* is painted after the same manner by *Virgil* ; the one kills  *Hector*, the other  *Turnus*, both which are the decisive actions : it was equally necessary to exalt the character of *Ulysses*, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself : this the Poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his Hero : thus as *Achilles* and *Aeneas* kill  *Hector* and  *Turnus* with their own hands, so the Suitors fall chiefly by the hand of *Ulysses*. It is necessary for the Hero of the Poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the Poet compleats his character, his own greatness surmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.

Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n, 281

Fortune or Fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence  
thine?

(Thus interpos'd the Martial maid divine)

Forgetful youth! but know, the Pow'r above 285

With ease can save each object of his love;

§. 282. *Fortune or Fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.*] It may be asked how an expression so near blasphemy, as *Eustathius* observes, could escape a person of such piety as *Telemachus*? It is true, the Poet makes *Minerva* herself correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could *Telemachus* speak it? I think since the Poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in *Telemachus*; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of *Telemachus*) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport *Telemachus* beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to Destiny: it was the opinion of the Antients, that the Gods could not alter Destiny: and then *Telemachus* may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the Destinies that *Ulysses* should return no more, so the Gods themselves could not restore him.

Thus in the xvth of the *Metamorphosis*, *Venus* in vain applies to the Gods to preserve *Julius Cæsar*.

— — “Superosque movet, qui rumpere quanquam  
“Ferrea non possunt veterum decreta sororum,” &c.

And a little lower *Jupiter* says to *Venus*,

— — — “Sola insuperabile fatum,  
“Nata, movere paras?”



Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace ;  
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.  
 Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,  
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last; 290  
 Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life  
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.  
 Death only is the lot which none can miss,  
 And all is possible to heav'n, but this.

§. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better imagined to encourage *Telemachus*, than what the Poet here delivers: *Minerva* sets *Agamemnon* in opposition to *Ulysses*: *Agamemnon* made a speedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery; *Ulysses* has long been absent, but yet is happier than *Agamemnon*: the Gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least nothing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is sufficient to teach *Telemachus* not to despair. *Eustathius*.

§. 294. *And all is possible to heav'n, but this.*] What *Minerva* here says justifies the remark I made, that what *Telemachus* seemed to have spoken rashly, may be softened, if not vindicated, by having recourse to Destiny: it is evident from this passage, that Destiny was superiour to the power of the Gods: otherwise *Minerva* speaks as blasphemously as *Telemachus*: for what difference is there between saying, that the Gods cannot preserve even those they love from death, and saying that the Gods could not save *Ulysses*? Why therefore may not the words of *Telemachus* be thought to have a respect to Destiny?

I am of opinion, that the Poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of *Minerva*: the words of *Telemachus*, if taken grossly, might appear shock-

The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295

Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.

Thus check'd, reply'd *Ulysses'* prudent heir :

*Mentor*, no more — the mournful thought forbear ;

For he no more must draw his country's breath,  
Already snatch'd by Fate, and the black doom of  
death ! 300

Pass we to other subjects ; and engage

On themes remote the venerable Sage :

ing to so pious a person as *Nestor*, and make an ill impression upon him to the disadvantage of *Telemachus* ; *Minerva* therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the Theology of those ages.

§. 301. *Pass we to other subjects ; —* ] *Telemachus* here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to *Nestor* ; and *Plutarch* observes upon this passage, that he who enquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once ; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art *Telemachus* uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses : he puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive *Nestor* of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. *Plutarch. Symposiac.*

(Who thrice has seen the perishable kind  
Of men decay, and thro' three ages shin'd,  
Like Gods majestick, and like Gods in mind.) 305 }

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws  
From various precedents, and various laws.

O son of *Neleus* ! awful *Nestor*, tell

How he, the mighty *Agamemnon* fell ? 309

By what strange fraud *Ægyſthus* wrought, relate,  
(By force he could not) ſuch a Hero's fate ?

Liv'd *Menelaus* not in *Greece* ! or where

Was then the martial brother's pious care ?

ſ. 303. *Who thrice had ſeen the perſhable kind  
Of men decay, —*]

The Poet here tells us that *Nestor* was now in his fourth generation : *Ovid* took the word *γῆνα* to ſignify an hundred years ; but then *Nestor* muſt have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability underſtand it to ſignify a generation, or ſuch a portion of time in which any race of men flouriſh together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the Reader to the Note of the 333d verſe of the firſt book of the *Iliad*, for the particular age of *Nestor*. According to that computation, he muſt now be about ninety-five years of age.

ſ. 309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell ?*] *Telemachus* does not aſk this queſtion out of curioſity, but with great judgment ; he knows there were deſigns againſt his life, as well as there had been againſt *Agamemnon* ; he therefore aſks it, that he may learn how to defeat them ; chiefly to inſtruct himſelf how beſt to aſſiſt his father upon his return, by aiding him in eſcaping the ſnares of the Suitors. *Dacier*.

Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread;  
Or sure *Ægyſthus* had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the Fuli of Days. Illuſtrious youth,  
Attend (tho' partly thou haſt gueſt) the truth.

For had the martial *Menelaus* found  
The ruſſian breathing yet on *Argive* ground;  
Nor earth had hid his carcaſe from the ſkies, 320

Nor *Grecian* virgins ſhriek'd his obſequies,  
But fowls obſcene diſmember'd his remains,

And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.

While us the works of bloody *Mars* employ'd,  
The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd; 325

He, ſtretch'd at eaſe in *Argos'* calm receſs,  
(Whoſe ſtately ſteeds luxuriant paſtures bleſs)

With flattery's inſinuating art

Sooth'd the frail Queen, and poiſon'd all her heart.

At firſt with worthy ſhame and decent pride, 330

The royal dame his lawleſs ſuit deny'd.

For Virtue's image yet poſſeſt her mind,

Taught by a Maſter of the tuneful kind :

\*. 333. *Taught by a Maſter of the tuneful kind.*] *Homer* through the whole *Odyssey* ſpeaks much in honour of the Art which he himſelf loved, and in which he ſo eminently ex-

*Atrides*, parting for the *Trojan* war,  
 Confin'd the youthful consort to his care. 335  
 True to his charge, the Bard preserv'd her long  
 In honour's limits ; such the pow'r of Song.  
 But when the Gods these objects of their hate  
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate ;  
 The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340  
 And left all helpless in a desert isle :

called : from these and other passages we may learn the state of Poetry in those ages : “ Poets (says *Eustathius*) were ranked “ in the class of Philosophers ; and the Ancients made use of “ them as Preceptors in Musick and Morality :” *Strabo* quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of Poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions : *Ægythus* could not debauch *Clytemnestra*, until he banished the Poet who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the Antients about the name of the Bard here celebrated : some, says *Eustathius*, tell us, it was *Chariades*, some *Demodocus*, some *Glaucus*, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these ἀοιδοί ; some were ἀοιδοὶ θρήνων, others ἀοιδοὶ περὶ γάμων : but such bards as are here mentioned were of an higher station, and retained as instructors by Kings and Princes.

I cannot omit one remark of *Eustathius* : he tells us, that some persons write that these ἀοιδοὶ had their names from hence, ὡς ἀοιδοῖα μὴ ἔχοντες ; exactly resembling the modern *Italian* singers : *Madam Dacier* is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance ; if this be true, it makes a great difference between the antient and modern Poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them.

There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,  
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.  
 Then Virtue was no more ; her guard away,  
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345  
 Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,  
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,  
 With images, with garments, and with gold ;  
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.

Meantime from flaming *Troy* we cut the way,  
 With *Menelaus*, thro' the curling sea. 351

‡. 344. *Then Virtue was no more ; her guard away,  
 She fell, ——— &c.]*

There is a fine moral couched in the story of the Bard and *Clytemnestra* ; it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our Virtues : *Clytemnestra* was chaste, because her instructor was wise : his wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded ; virtue and honour had a long contest ; but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband ; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another : and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. *Dacier.*

‡. 346. *Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]* Here is a surprising mixture of religion and impiety : *Ægythus*, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the Gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. *Nestor* dwells upon it at large, to shew that *Ægythus* greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. *Dacier.*

But when to *Sunium's* sacred point we came,  
 Crown'd with the temple of th' *Athenian* dame;  
*Atrides' pilot, Phrontes*, there expir'd ;  
 (*Phrontes*, of all the fons of men admir'd 355  
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,  
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)  
 While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,  
*Apollo* touch'd him with his gentle dart ;  
 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360  
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,

γ. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.*] *Homer* calls the darts of *Apollo* ἀγανά, or gentle; to signify that those who die thus suddenly, die without pain. *Eustathius*.

*Dacier* complains that some Criticks think *Homer* worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confined as in these ages to mean personages: no less a person than *Ulysses* builds a vessel in the sequel of the *Odyssey*; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If *Homer* be culpable, so is *Virgil*; he gives the genealogy of *Palinurus*, as well as *Homer* of *Phrontes*. *Virgil's* description is censured as too long, *Homer* concludes his in seven lines; and lastly, *Virgil's* Episode has been judged by the Criticks to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the Poem; *Homer* relates the death of *Phrontes*, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of *Menelaus*; the fleet might well be scattered, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,  
 And laid our old companion in the ground.  
 And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep  
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep : 365  
 Soon as *Malæa*'s misty tops arise,  
 Sudden the thund'rer blackens all the skies,  
 And the winds whistle, and the furies roll  
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.  
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370  
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of *Crete*,  
 Where winding round the rich *Cydonian* plain,  
 The streams of *Jardan* issue to the main.  
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,  
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375  
 And views *Gortyna* on the western side ;  
 On this rough *Auster* drove th' impetuous tide :  
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,  
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay,

†. 371. *Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete.*] *Homer* does not amuse us by relating what became of these companions of *Menelaus* ; he omits this judiciously, and follows the thread of his story : *Menelaus* is the person whom the Poet has in view ; he therefore passes over the story of his companions, to carry on the fable of the Poem by leading us directly to *Menelaus*.



Thus fav'd from death, they gain'd the *Phæstian*  
shores, 380

With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars :

But five tall barks the winds and waters toft,  
Far from their fellows, on th' *Ægyptian* coast.

There wander'd *Menelaus* thro' foreign shores,  
Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores ; 385

While curst *Ægyptus* the detested deed

By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.

Sev'n years, the traitor rich *Mycenæ* sway'd,

And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd ;

The eighth, from *Athens* to his realm restor'd,

*Orestes* brandish'd the revenging sword, 391

†. 383. ——— *On the Ægyptian coast.*] In the original it is, *The wind and water carried them to Ægyptus*. *Homer* by *Ægyptus* means the river *Nile*, and then it is always used in the masculine gender ; the region about it took its name from the river *Ægyptus*, this is always used in the feminine gender ; but the country had not received that name in the days of *Homer*. *Eustathius*.

What *Dacier* adds to this observation, may assist in determining the dispute concerning the priority of *Homer* and *Hesiod*: *Hesiod* makes mentions of the river *Nilus* ; if therefore it be true that *Ægyptus* had not been called by the name of *Nilus* in the times of *Homer*, it is a demonstration that *Hesiod* was posterior to *Homer* ; otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name but that of *Ægyptus*.

†. 390. *From Athens to his realm* ———] There is a different reading in this place ; instead of ἀπ' Ἀθηνῶν, some write

Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame  
The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.

That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,  
Return'd *Atrides* to the coast of *Greece*, 395

And safe to *Argos*' port his navy brought,  
With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.

Hence warn'd, my son beware! nor idly stand  
Too long a stranger to thy native land;

Left heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400  
While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;

Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil;  
And thou return, with disappointed toil,  
From thy vain journey, to a rifled Isle. }

Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more,  
And seek *Atrides* on the *Spartan* shore: 406

He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,  
And many-languag'd nations has survey'd;

ὡς πρὸ Φωκίων; for *Orestes* was educated by *Strophius* King of *Phocis*, and father of *Pylades*: the Ancients reconcile the difference, by saying that *Orestes* might be sent from *Phocis* to *Athens* for his education, and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death of his father *Agamemnon*; so that although he was first bred up in *Phocis*, he was afterwards a sojourner in *Athens*. *Eustathius*.

And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,  
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps ; 410  
 (A length of Ocean and unbounded sky,  
 Which scarce the Sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)  
 Go then ; to *Sparta* take the wat'ry way,  
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay ;  
 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend, 415  
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend :

†. 411. *A length of Ocean and unbounded sky,  
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.*]

It must be confest, that *Nestor* greatly exaggerates this description: *Homer* himself tells us, that a ship may sail in five days from *Crete* to *Egypt*; wherefore then this Hyperbole of *Nestor*? It might perhaps be to deter *Telemachus* from a design of sailing to *Crete*, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what *Nestor* speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea: nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth; the meaning then must be this: should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it, both because of the vastness and dreadfulnes of it; and perhaps the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from *Eustathius*; and if we add to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as *Nestor* describing it with so much terrour. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns sail further in a month; than the Ancients could in a year; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.

Thee to *Atrides* they shall safe convey,  
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.  
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,  
 And sure he will: for *Menelaus* is wise. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,  
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.  
 Then thus the blue-ey'd Maid: O full of days!  
 Wife are thy words, and just are all thy ways.  
 Now immolate the Tongues, and mix the wine,  
 Sacred to *Neptune* and the pow'rs divine. 426  
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,  
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep:

§. 425. *Now immolate the Tongues* —] Various are the reasons which *Eustathius* reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have uttered; or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it; or they offered the tongue to the Gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to *Mercury*, because they believed him the giver of Eloquence. *Dacier* expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion: by this sacrifice of the tongues, they signified that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival; and asked in particular pardon of *Mercury*, who presided over discourse, to the end they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,  
Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

So spake *Jove's* daughter, the celestial maid.  
The sober train attended and obey'd.  
The sacred heralds on their hands around  
Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets  
crown'd:

From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows; 435  
While to the final sacrifice they rose.  
The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,  
And pour, above, the consecrated stream.

†. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,  
Timeless, indecent, &c.:*

*Eustathius* shews the difference between *ἑσπιάς*, festivals, and *θύσας*, or sacrifices: in the former it was customary to spend the whole night in wine and rejoicing: in the latter, this was reckoned an unlawful custom, through the fear of falling into any indecencies through wine. He likewise gives another reason of this injunction, by telling us that it was the custom to offer sacrifices to the celestial Powers in the day, and even to finish them about the setting of the sun; and that those who dealt in incantations performed their sacrifices to the infernal powers by night, and finished them before sun-rising. Either of these reasons sufficiently explains the words of the Goddess; and the former carries in it an excellent moral, that particular care should be taken in our acts of devotion, not to turn religion into impiety.

And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,  
 The youthful Hero and th' *Athenian* maid 440  
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,  
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night :  
 But this the hospitable Sage deny'd.  
 Forbid it, *Jove!* and all the Gods ! he cry'd,  
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send  
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend ! 446  
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,  
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve ?  
 Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,  
 When beds of royal state invite your stay ? 450

\*. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay?*] This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages ; they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ξυνία*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. *Eustathius* relates, that *Tellias* of *Agrigentum* was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunick. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries : it was the practice of *Abraham* of old, and is at this day of the *Turks*, as we may learn from their *Caravanseras*, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet *Dacier* observes, that a *French* Critick has shewed so ill a taste as to ridicule this passage. “ *Telemachus* (says that author) “ being entertained by *Nestor*, intimates his intention of re-

No — long as life this mortal shall inspire,  
 Or as my children imitate their fire,  
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,  
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

Well hast thou spoke (the blue-ey'd Maid  
 replies) 455

Belov'd old man! benevolent, as wise.  
 Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,  
 And let thy words *Telemachus* persuade:  
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue;  
 I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460 }  
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.  
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,  
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs;  
 All youths the rest, whom to this journey move  
 Like years, like tempers, and their Prince's love.

“ turning to lodge on ship-board with his companions: but  
 “ *Nestor* detains him, by asking him if he thought he had not  
 “ quilts or coverlets to give him a Night's lodging: upon  
 “ this *Telemachus* goes to bed in a resounding gallery, and  
 “ *Nestor* in a bed which his wife made ready for him.” The  
 noblest things are most liable to burlesque, by perverting their  
 meaning; as some pictures, by varying the position, represent  
 a man or a monster. He is very severe upon the *resounding*  
*gallery*, which in truth means no more than very lofty or ele-  
 vated, and by consequence very noble and magnificent.

There in the vessel shall I pass the night; 466  
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,  
 I go to challenge from the *Caucons* bold,  
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.  
 But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470  
 Let thy strong coursers swift to *Sparta* bear;  
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,  
 And be thy son companion of his way.

†. 468. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The Poet makes a double use of these words of the Goddess; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be pressed to stay; and at the same time *Homer* avoids the absurdity of introducing that Goddess at *Sparta*; *Menelaus* and *Helen* are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter: *Minerva* is a Virgin Deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. *Eustathius*.

But it may be necessary to observe who these *Caucons* are: we find in the tenth book of the *Iliad*, the *Caucons* mentioned as auxiliaries to *Troy*: there *Dolon* says,

The *Carians*, *Caucons*, the *Pelasgian* host,  
 And *Leleges* encamp along the coast.

Are these *Caucons* the same with those here mentioned? *Eustathius* informs us, that there was a people of *Triphyly*, between *Elis* and *Pylos*, named *Caucons*: but *Strabo* says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mentioned are of *Dymæa*, and take their name from the river *Caucon*: whereas those in the *Iliad* are *Paphlagonians*: they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.



Then turning with the word, *Minerva* flies,  
 And soars an Eagle thro' the liquid skies. 475  
 Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze  
 In holy wonder fixt, and still amaze.  
 But chief the rev'rend Sage admir'd; he took  
 The hand of young *Telemachus*, and spoke,  
 Oh happy Youth! and favour'd of the skies,  
 Distinguish'd care of guardian Deities! 481

¶. 478. *But chief the rev'rend Sage admir'd* —] It may be asked why *Nestor* is in such a surprise at the discovery of the Goddess: it is evident from the *Iliad*, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the Deities; nay, in this very book *Nestor* tells us, that *Ulysses* enjoyed almost the constant presence of *Minerva*; insomuch that *Sophocles*, the great imitator of *Homer*, relates, that he knew the Goddess by her voice, without seeing her. *Eustathius* answers, that the wonder of *Nestor* arose not from the discovery of that Deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as *Telemachus*: after her departure, the old man stood amazed, and looked upon that Hero as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the Goddess of War and Wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what *Nestor* speaks to *Telemachus*.

¶. 481. *Distinguish'd care of guardian Deities!*] I will take this opportunity to obviate an objection that may be made against all interposition of the Gods in assisting the Heroes of the *Odyssey*: it has been thought by some Criticks a disparagement to them to stand in continual need of such supernatural succour: if two persons were engaged in combat, and a third person should immediately step in to the assistance of one of the parties, and kill the adversary, would it not reflect upon the valour of his friend who was so weak as to

Whose early years for future worth engage,  
No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.

want such assistance? Why, for instance, should *Jupiter* help *Aeneas* to kill *Turnus*? Was not he brave enough to fight, and strong enough to conquer his enemy by his own prowess? and would not *Turnus* have killed *Aeneas* with the same assistance? It is therefore a disparagement to the actors, thus continually to supply the defects of a Hero by the power of a Deity.

But this is a false way of arguing, and from hence it might be inferred, that the love and favour of a Deity serves only to make those whom he assists, and those who depend upon such assistance, appear weak, impotent, cowardly, and unworthy to be conquerors. Can any doubt arise whether the love and favour of a God be a disparagement or honour to those whom he favours? According to these Criticks, we should find the character of a perfect Hero in an impious *Mezentius*, who acknowledges no God but his own arm and his own sword: it is true, the objection would be just, if the Hero himself performed nothing of the action; or if when he were almost conquered by the superiour valour of his enemy, he owed his life and victory to Gods and Miracles: but the hero always behaves himself in all his actions, as if he were to gain success without the assistance of the Deity; and the presence of the Gods is so ordered, that we may retrench every thing that is miraculous, without making any alteration in the action or character of the human personages. Thus in the instance of *Aeneas* and *Turnus*, though *Jupiter* favours *Aeneas*, yet *Aeneas* is painted in stronger colours of fortitude, he appears superiour, as a man unassisted, and able to conquer *Turnus*; and consequently the favour of *Jupiter* makes no alteration in the action or character of *Aeneas*.

There is likewise a wide difference between the assistance of a Man and of a God: the actions of men belong only to the performers of those actions: but when a Deity assists us by inspiring us with strength and courage, the actions we per-

For lo! none other of the court above  
 Than she, the daughter of almighty *Jove*, 485  
*Pallas* herself, the War-triumphant Maid,  
 Confest is thine, as once thy father's aid.  
 So guide me, Goddess! so propitious shine  
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!  
 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490  
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,  
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,  
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

Submissive thus the hoary Sire preferr'd  
 His holy vow: the fav'ring Goddess heard. 495  
 Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space  
 Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,

form are really our own, and the more he favours us, the more glory he gives us: so that the assistance of man eclipses, but the assistance of a God exalts, our glory. Thus, for instance, when *Achilles* is pursuing *Hector*, he charges the *Greeks* to keep off from *Hector*, their assistance might lessen his glory: but when *Pallas* offers her assistance, he immediately embraces it as an honour, and boasts of it as such to *Hector*. I have been large upon this objection, because the Reader ought to carry it in his memory through the whole Poem, and apply it to every action, in which any share is ascribed to any Deity. See *Bosju* more at large concerning this objection.

(A long procession) timely marching home  
In comely order to the regal dome.

There when arriv'd, on thrones around him  
plac'd, 500

His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd.

To these the hospitable Sage, in sign

Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,

(Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to  
light,

By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright.) 505

To *Pallas* high the foaming bowl he crown'd,

And sprinkled large Libations on the ground.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,

And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

Deep in a rich Alcove the Prince was laid, 510

And slept beneath the pompous Colonade ;

Fast by his side *Pisistratus* lay spread,

(In age his equal) on a splendid bed :

But in an inner court, securely clos'd,

The rev'rend *Nestor* and his Queen repos'd. 515

When now *Aurora*, daughter of the dawn,

With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn ;

The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat  
 On polish'd stone before his Palace gate :  
 With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone,  
 Where ancient *Neleus* sat, a rustick throne ; 521  
 But he descending to th' infernal shade,  
 Sage *Nestor* fill'd it, and the scepter sway'd.  
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,  
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525  
 First *Echephron* and *Stratius* quit their bed ;  
 Then *Perseus*, *Aretus*, and *Thrasymed* ;

§. 518. — — — — — *And sat On polish'd stone before his palace gate.*] We have here 'an ancient custom recorded by the Poet ; a King places himself before the gate of his Palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth by long use, says *Eustathius*, or perhaps smoothed exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is, that they placed themselves thus in publick for the dispatch of justice : we read in the scripture of Judges *sitting in the gate* : and that this procedure of *Nestor* was for that purpose, is probable from the expression, *He sat in the seat where Neleus* [νῆστωρ, or *Consiliarius*,] *used to sit*, (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice.) *Nestor* is also described as bearing his scepter in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says *Dacier*, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of justice as by an act of religion ; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

The last *Pisistratus* arose from rest :

They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.

To these the Senior thus declar'd his will : 530

My sons ! the dictates of your Sire fulfil.

To *Pallas*, first of Gods, prepare the feast,

Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.

Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead

A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead ; 535

One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,

And bring thy friends, *Telemachus* ! ashore,

(Leave only two the galley to attend)

Another to *Laerces* must we send,

Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540

The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.

†. 528. *Pisistratus*.] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture, I might suppose that the famous tyrant *Pisistratus* was descended, or borrowed his name from this son of *Nestor*. *Herodotus* informs us, as *Eustathius* observes, that all the *Pisistrati* were originally *Pylans*. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that *Homer* is not all fiction; but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality; and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of Poetry.

†. 540. *Laerces* — *Artist divine*, &c.] The Author of the *Parallel* quotes this passage to prove that *Homer* was ignorant of the Mechanick arts: we have here, says he, a Gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occasion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a Gilder? *Boileau* has

The rest may here the pious duty share,  
 And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,  
 The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,  
 And limpid waters from the living spring. 545

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd;  
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,  
 Already came the *Ithacensian* crew,  
 The dext'rous smith the tools already drew :  
 His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil sound, 550  
 And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.  
 Nor was *Minerva* absent from the rite,  
 She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.

excellently vindicated *Homer* from this objection, in his reflections upon *Longinus*; this Gilder was a Gold-beater: *Nestor*, we see, furnished the gold, and he beat it into leaves, so that he had occasion to make use of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, because the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers assure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eastern regions, as in *Persia*, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the house of the persons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of *Homer*, to observe that the gold this artist used in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

\*: 552. *Nor was Minerva absent* —] It may be asked in what sense *Minerva* can be said to come to the sacrifice? *Eustathius* answers, that the Ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleasures, to oblige them

With rev'rend hand the King presents the gold,  
 Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;  
 Sowrought, as *Pallas* might with pride behold. 556  
 Young *Aretus* from forth his bridal bow'r  
 Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,  
 And canisters of consecrated flour.  
*Stratius* and *Echepbron* the victim led; 560  
 The ax was held by warlike *Thrasymed*,

to use them moderately, distinguished times, ordained sacrifices, and representing the Gods in the forms of men, brought them to use those pleasures with discretion; they taught them that the Gods came down to their libations and sacrifices, to induce them to govern their conversation with reverence and modesty: thus *Jupiter* and the other Gods in the *Iliad*, and *Neptune* in the *Odyssey*, are said to feast with the *Æthiopians*.

If I might be pardoned a conjecture, I would suppose, that *Minerva* may in another sense be said to come to the sacrifice; I mean by her image or statue: and what may seem to confirm this opinion, is what *Diodorus* relates in his third book concerning the abovementioned *Æthiopians*; they carried about the statues of *Jupiter* and the other Gods twelve days, during which time the Gods were said to be gone to the *Æthiopians*: and if the Gods may be said to come to the *Æthiopians* by their statues, why may not the same be said of *Minerva*, from the introduction of her statue among the *Pylions*? So that the appearance of the Goddesses may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

ψ. 560. *Stratius* and *Echepbron*, &c.] *Nestor* here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckoned honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the



In act to strike: before him *Perseus* stood,  
 The vase extending to receive the blood.  
 The King himself initiates to the Pow'r;  
 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565  
 And the stream sprinkles: from the curling brows  
 The hair collected in the fire he throws.  
 Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,  
 And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,  
 Strong *Thrasymed* discharg'd the speeding blow 570  
 Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.  
 Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round,  
 Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling found.

Gods: or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by servants.

*Eustathius* reports a saying of *Antigenus*, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, "Know'st thou not, says he, that Royalty itself is but illustrious servitude!" An intimation that he himself was but a servant of the publick, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

But the true reason of *Nestor's* assisting in the sacrifice is, because Kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and Priesthood was joined to Royalty, according to that of *Virgil*,

"Rex *Anius*, rex idem hominum *Phœbique* sacerdos."

†. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling found.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries, *ἰνὸς ἔσαν. Ὀνέλιον*, says

Nor scorn'd the Queen the holy choir to join,  
 (The first-born she, of old *Clymenus*' line; 575  
 In youth by *Nestor* lov'd, of spotless fame,  
 And lov'd in age, *Eurydice* her name.)  
 From earth they rear him, struggling now with  
 death;  
 And *Nestor*'s Youngest stops the vents of breath.  
 The soul for ever flies: on all sides round 580  
 Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the  
 ground.

The beast they then divide, and disunite  
 The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite:

*Hesychius*, is, φωνὴ γυναικῶν ἢ ποιῆσαι ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐχόμεναι, *the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers.* But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the Scholiast upon *Æschylus* remarks that this word is not used properly but when applied to the prayers offered to *Minerva*, for *Minerva* is the only Goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the Goddess of War; to other Deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; καὶ γὰρ μόνῃ τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ δαίμονι ἔση πολεμικῇ ἐκολύβεσσι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις Θεοῖς παιωνίζουσι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the *Iliad*, §. 301.

Αἶ δ' ἐκὼλυγ' ᾤσασαι Ἀθηνῇ χυῖρας ἄνεσσαν.

They fill the dome with supplicating cries.

And in the present passage in the *Odyssey*,

— — — αἶ δ' ἐκὼλυξαν

Ουσατέρης τε, υιοί τε, &c. *Dacier.*

On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,  
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585  
 The sacred Sage before his altar stands,  
 Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,  
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire:  
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.  
 The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590  
 Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.  
 While these officious tend the rites divine,  
 The last fair branch of the *Nestorean* line,  
 Sweet *Polycaste*, took the pleasing toil 594  
 To bathe the Prince, and pour the fragrant oil.

¶. 594. *Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil  
 To bathe the Prince, &c.]*

It is very necessary to say something about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs through the whole *Odyssey*, and is so contrary to the usage of the Moderns, as to give offence to modesty; neither is this done by women of inferior quality, but we have here a young Princess, bathing, anointing, and cloathing the naked *Telemachus*. *Eustathius* indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodesty, it does not solve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confess it would be immodest in these ages of the world, and the only excuse that occurs to me is, to say that Custom established it. It is in manners, in some degree, as in dress; if a fashion never so indecent prevails, yet no person is ridiculous, because it is fashionable: so in manners, if a practice

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,  
 And issu'd, like a God, to mortal view.  
 His former feat beside the King he found,  
 (His people's father with his Peers around)  
 All plac'd at ease the holy banquet join, 600  
 And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,  
 The Monarch turns him to his royal guest ;  
 And for the promis'd journey bids prepare  
 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605  
 Observant of his word ; the word scarce spoke,  
 The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.  
 Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,  
 And presents, such as suit the state of Kings.  
 The glitt'ring feat *Telemachus* ascends ; 610  
 His faithful guide *Pisistratus* attends ;

prevails universally, though not reconcilable to real modesty, yet no person can be said to be immodest who comes into it, because it is agreeable to the custom of the times and countries.

§. 610, &c. *The conclusion of the book.*] I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book : it is remarkable, that the Poet does not amuse himself in describing the present *Telemachus* received from *Nestor*, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey itself at large ; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously ; he carries his Hero directly to *Mentaus*, who is to fur-

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew:  
 He lash'd the courfers, and the courfers flew.  
 Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held  
 Their equal pace, and smok'd along the  
                   field. 615

nish many incidents that contribute to the design of the Poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

We have likewise a piece of poetical Geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from *Pyle* to *Lacedæmon*.

This book takes up three days; the first is spent in the inquiries *Telemachus* makes of *Nestor* concerning *Ulysses*; the two last in the morning sacrifice at *Pylus*, and in the journey of *Telemachus* to *Lacedæmon*; so that five days have now passed since the opening of the Poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, though it be the most exact description of the sacrifices, as practised by the Ancients, perhaps extant in any Author; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the *Iliad*.

I would here remark that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity, there has been no room for such exalted strokes of Poetry as are to be found in the *Iliad*, or in the future parts of the *Odyssey*: but this is not owing to the decay of genius in *Homer*, as some Criticks have affirmed, (who look upon the *Odyssey* as bearing marks of his declining years) but to the nature of the subject. The characters of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* are both very great, but very different. The *Iliad* consists of battles and a continual commotion; the *Odyssey* in Patience and Wisdom: and consequently the style of the two Poems must be as different as the characters of the two Heroes. A noble fountain of Poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost through the whole *Odyssey*.

The tow'rs of *Pylos* sink, its views decay,  
 Fields after fields fly back, 'till close of day :  
 Then sunk the Sun, and darken'd all the way. }

To *Pheræ* now, *Diocleus*' stately seat,  
 (Of *Alpheus*' race) the weary youths retreat. 620  
 His house affords the hospitable rite,  
 And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night.)  
 But when *Aurora*, daughter of the dawn,  
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;  
 Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625  
 And from the sounding portico they flew.  
 Along the waving fields their way they hold,  
 The fields receding as the chariot roll'd :  
 Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,  
 And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630





THE  
FOURTH BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.



## The A R G U M E N T.

### The Conference with *Menelaus*.

**T**ELEMACHUS with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the Prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the Island of Calypso.

In the meantime the Suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprized of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphima.





THE  
\* FOURTH BOOK  
OF THE  
ODYSSEY.

**A**ND now proud *Sparta* with their wheels  
    resounds,  
*Sparta* whose walls a range of hills furrounds :  
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;  
Where sat *Atrides* 'midst his bridal friends,

\* *Aristotle* in his *Poeticks* reports, that certain ancient Criticks reproached *Homer* for an indecency in making *Telemachus* take his abode with *Menelaus*, and not with his own grandfather *Icarius* : this *Monsieur Dacier* sufficiently answers, by shewing that *Icarius* had settled himself in *Acarnania*, and not in *Lacedæmon*.

With double vows invoking *Hymen's* pow'r, 5  
To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.

†. 5. — *invoking Hymen's pow'r.*] *Athenæus* has been very severe upon this passage, as *Eustathius* observes, and *Dacier* from *Eustathius*.

*Aristarchus*, says *Athenæus*, misguides us, the words τὸν δ' ἔπει δαμνίλα led him into an error; whereas the marriage is compleated, the wedded couple gone away from *Menelaus*, and he and *Helen* at *Lacedæmon*. The five verses, continues he, (the fifteenth to the twentieth inclusively in the *Greek*) are taken from the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, and inserted very improperly in this place by *Aristarchus*. *Athenæus* gives several reasons for his opinion, as that musick and dancing were very contrary to the severe manners of the *Lacedæmonians*; besides the dance was a *Cretan* dance, how then could it be practised among the *Spartans*? The Poet mentions neither the name of the Bard, nor one word of the subject of the songs: neither can the words μολπῆς ἐξάχχοις be applied at all to the Dancers, but to the Musicians; and lastly, it is not to be imagined that *Telemachus* and *Pisistratus* should be so unpolite, as not to be at all affected with the musick, had there been any, and yet break out into such wonder at the sight of the beauty of the Palace of *Menelaus*. *Aristarchus*, adds he, thought the description of the wedding of the son and daughter of a King was too meanly and concisely described, and therefore made this addition.

But it is easy to refute *Athenæus*, and vindicate *Aristarchus*. *Athenæus* understood ἀίμπε and ἔργω in the wrong tense, they are of the imperfect, *he was sending*, or *about to send*, and not *had sent*, &c. If the marriage had been absolutely finished, why should *Minerva* absent herself from *Menelaus*, when the celebration of the nuptials is the only reason of the absence of that Goddess? And as for musick and dancing being contrary to the severe manners of the *Lacedæmonians*, this is all conjecture: *Menelaus* lived more than three hundred years before *Lycurgus*; and because such diversions were forbid in

That day, to great *Achilles'* son resign'd,  
*Hermione*, the fairest of her kind,  
 Was sent to crown the long protracted joy,  
 Espous'd before the final doom of *Troy* : 10

*Sparta* in the days of *Lycurgus*, must it follow that they were not used in those of *Menelaus*? And should it be granted that musick and dancing were not used in his times, might he not relax a little from the severity of his times, upon such an occasion of joy as the marriage of a son and daughter? I am sure these diversions are not more contrary to the severity of the *Spartans*, than the magnificence of the Palace of *Menelaus* was to their simplicity. "But he does not name the Bard, or the subject of his songs." But is this a reason why the verses are spurious? We should rather admire the judgment of the Poet, who having so fair an opportunity to describe these nuptials, yet rejects the temptation, dismisses the whole in a few lines, and follows where his subject leads him. The objection about the dance being *Cretan* is not more valid: *Menelaus* (as we may learn from the preceding book) had been in *Crete*, and might bring it thence to *Lacedæmon*. And as for the Criticism upon *ἱξάρχεις*, it is but a fallacy; *Casaubon* has shewn beyond contradiction, that *ἱξάρχεις* is applied indifferently to all those who give example to others; and consequently may be applied to Dancers as well as Musicians. It may be further added, that although it should be allowed that the word *ἱξάρχεις* is only properly applied to musick, yet in this place the word would not be improperly applied to dancers; for the dancers, without usurping upon the province of the singer, might *μολπῆς ἱξάρχεις*, or chuse those songs, to which they desired to dance, as is the usage at this day.

*Diodorus* is of opinion, that the whole twelve lines after the second to the fifteenth are not genuine; but what has been said of *Athenæus*, may be applied to *Diodorus*.

With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train  
 Attend the nymph to *Phthia*'s distant reign.  
 Meanwhile at home, to *Megapenthes*' bed  
 The virgin-choir *Alektor*'s daughter led.  
 Brave *Megapenthes*, from a stol'n amour 15  
 To great *Atrides*' age his hand-maid bore :  
 To *Helen*'s bed the Gods alone assign  
*Hermione*, t' extend the regal line ;  
 On whom a radiant pomp of Graces wait,  
 Resembling *Venus* in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the King surround,  
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound :  
 A Bard amid the joyous circle sings  
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;  
 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance 25  
 Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.  
 'Twas then, that issuing thro' the palace gate  
 The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state :  
 On the bright eminence young *Nestor* shone,  
 And fast beside him great *Ulysses*' son : 30  
 Grave *Eteoneus* saw the pomp appear,  
 And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove

Their blood devolving from the source of *Jove*.  
Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35  
Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend?

Insensate! (with a sigh the King replies)

Too long, mis-judging, have I thought thee wise:  
But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,

Obdurate to reject the stranger-guest; 40

To those dear hospitable rites a foe,

Which in my wand'rings oft' reliev'd my woe:

Fed by the bounty of another's board,

'Till pitying *Jove* my native realm restor'd —

Straight be the courfers from the car releas'd, 45

Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

§. 37. Menelaus blames Eteoneus.] This is the first appearance of *Menelaus*; and surely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the spectators, than those amiable colours in which the Poet paints him. There is an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expressions, like that of *Dido* in *Virgil*,

“ Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.”

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that those men are more tender-hearted and humane who have felt the reverse of fortune, than those who have only lived in a condition of prosperity.

The Seneschal rebuk'd in haste withdrew ;  
 With equal haste a menial train pursue :  
 Part led the courfers, from the car enlarg'd,  
 Each to a crib with choicest grain furcharg'd ; 50  
 Part in a portico, profusely grac'd  
 With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd :  
 Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,  
 Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;  
 Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon, 55  
 Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.  
 From room to room their eager view they bend ;  
 Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend ;  
 Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests  
 With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests. 60  
 Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,  
 Where circled with his Peers *Atrides* sat :  
 Thron'd next the King, a fair attendant brings  
 The purest product of the crystal springs ;  
 High on a massy vase of silver mold, 65  
 The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold :  
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,  
 And on the board a second banquet rose.

When thus the King with hospitable port : —  
 Accept this welcome to the *Spartan* court ; 70  
 The waste of nature let the feast repair,  
 Then your high lineage and your names declare :  
 Say from what scepter'd ancestry ye claim,  
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?  
 For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75  
 With signatures of such majestick grace.

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns  
 The royal portion of the choicest chimes  
 To each accepted friend : with grateful haste  
 They share the honours of the rich repast. 80  
 Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to *Nestor's* son,  
 His head reclin'd, young *Ithacus* begun.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most !  
 These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost !  
 Above, beneath, around the Palace shines 85  
 The sumless treasure of exhausted mines :

†. 81. *Soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial in *Telemachus* ; but it shews his address and decency : he whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in shewing too much surprise at the magnificence of the Palace of *Menelaus*. *Eustathius*.

The spoils of elephants the roofstainlay,  
 And studded amber darts a golden ray :  
 Such, and not nobler, in the realms above  
 My wonder dictates is the dome of *Jove*. 90

The Monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.  
 Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride  
 Of man, who dares in pomp with *Jove* contest,  
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest !  
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,  
 Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid. 96

§. 91. *The Monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says *Euphathius*, observe the prudence of *Menelaus*, in his reply to *Telemachus* ; and the prudence of *Telemachus* in his behaviour to *Menelaus* : *Menelaus* denies not his riches and magnificence ; but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with his misfortunes : and *Telemachus* coming into the Palace at the time of an entertainment, chuses to satisfy his curiosity rather than his appetite. *Plutarch*, I confess, condemns *Telemachus* of inexperience ; who when he saw the Palace of *Nestor* furnished only with things useful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is seized with no admiration ; but the superfluities of *Menelaus*, his ivory, amber and gold, &c. carry him into transports : whereas a *Socrates* or a *Diogenes* would have exclaimed, What heaps of vanities have I beheld ! It is true, such a judgment might become Philosophers ; but who, as *Dacier* observes, can think the character of a *Socrates* or a *Diogenes* suitable to young *Telemachus* ? What is decent in a Prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wisdom of a Philosopher.



For eight flow-circling years by tempest tost,  
 From *Cyprus* to the far *Phœnician* coast,  
 (*Sidon* the Capital) I stretch'd my toil  
 Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of *Nile*. 100  
 Next, *Æthiopia*'s utmost bound explore,  
 And the parch'd borders of th' *Arabian* shore :  
 Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,  
 O'er the warm *Libyan* wave to spread my sails :  
 That happy clime ! where each revolving year 105  
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear ;

†. 100. *Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.*  
*Next, Æthiopia, &c.]*

The words are in the original Αἰγυπλίης ἰπαλόςθις, others read them Αἰγυπλίης ἐν ἀλσόςθις, from their veracity in oracles, for which they were very famous ; and indeed the word ἰπαλόςθις is not necessary, it being used in the very same sentence, though it must be confessed such repetitions are frequent in *Homer*. There is also a different reading of the word ἰρήμους ; some have it ἰρήμους, or *Blacks* ; others, Ζιδόνες Ἀφῶνας τε ; but the common reading is thought the best. The *Erembi* are the *Arabian Troglodytes*. *Strabo* informs us, that in former ages the bounds of the *Æthiopians* lay near to *Thebes* in *Ægypt*, so that *Menelaus* travelling to *Thebes*, might with ease visit the *Æthiopians*. Others have without any foundation imagined that he passed the straits of *Gibraltar*, and failed to the *Indies*. *Sidon* is the capital of the *Phœnicians*. *Eusebius*.

†. 105. — — — where each revolving year  
*The teeming ewes, &c.]*

And two fair crescents of translucent-horn  
 The brows of all their young increase adorn :  
 The shepherd swains with sure abundance blest,  
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast ; 110  
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,  
 But every season fills the foaming pail.  
 Whilst heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam ;  
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,

These sheep, as described by *Homer*, may be thought the creation of the Poet, and not the production of nature : but *Herodotus*, says *Eustathius*, writes, that in *Scythia* the oxen have no horns through the extremity of the cold : he quotes this very verse, rightly intimating, adds *Herodotus*, that in hot regions the horns of cattle shoot very speedily. *Aristotle* directly asserts, that in *Libya* the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they are brought into the world. So that *Aristotle* and *Herodotus* vindicate *Homer*. The Poet adds, that the sheep breed three times in the year ; these words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three seasons of the year, and not only in the spring, as in other countries ; or that the sheep have at once three lambs ; but the first is the better interpretation. *Athenæus* upon this passage writes, that there are things in other countries no less strange than what *Homer* relates of these sheep of *Libya*. Thus in *Lusitania*, a country of *Spain*, now *Portugal*, there is a wonderful fruitfulness in all cattle, by reason of the excellent temper of the air ; the fruits there never rot, and the roses, violets and asparagus, never fail above three months in the year. *Eustathius*.

γ. 114. *The best of brothers, ———*  
 ——— *a traitress wife.*]

By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115

Ends the sad evening of a stormy life :

Whence with incessant grief, my soul annoy'd,

These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd !

My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,

To you, your fathers have recorded long : 120

*Menelaus* neither mentions *Agamemnon*, *Clytemnestra*, nor *Ægysthus* by name ; a just indignation and resentment is the occasion of his suppressing the names of *Clytemnestra* and *Ægysthus*. Through the whole *Iliad* *Menelaus* is described as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears *Agamemnon* is the reason why he passes by his name in silence. We see that he dispatches the whole in one verse and a half ; *Nestor* had told the story pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a person less nearly concerned, might speak of it with more ease and better temper than *Menelaus* ; the Poet avoids a needless repetition, and a repetition too of a story universally known to all the *Greeks*. The death of *Agamemnon* is distributed into four places in the *Odyssey* ; *Nestor*, *Menelaus*, *Proteus*, and the shade of *Agamemnon* in the eleventh book, all relate it, and every one very properly. *Proteus* as a prophet more fully than *Nestor* and *Menelaus*, and *Agamemnon* more fully than them all, as being best acquainted with it. *Eustathius*.

§. 119. *My wars, the copious theme, &c.*] In the original *Menelaus* says, *I have destroyed a house, &c.* There is an ambiguity in the expression, as *Eustathius* observes : for it may either signify the *house* of *Priam*, or his own in *Argos* ; if it be understood of his own, then the meaning is, “ I have  
“ indeed great wealth, but have purchased it with the loss of  
“ my people ; I could be content with the third part of it, if  
“ I could restore those to life who have perished before *Troy*.” If it be understood of the kingdom of *Priam*, the regret he shews will still appear the greater. He is enumerating his

How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils  
 With a sack'd Palace, and barbarick spoils.  
 Oh! had the Gods so large a boon deny'd,  
 And Life, the just equivalent, supply'd 124  
 To those brave warriors, who with glory fir'd,  
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd!  
 Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,  
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,  
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!  
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130  
 But oh! *Ulysses* — deeper than the rest  
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast!

domestick happiness, and his foreign conquest of *Troy*; but he throws the destruction of so many brave men who fell before it, in the contrary scale; and it so far outweighs both his wealth and his glory, that they both are joyless to him. Either of these interpretations shew an excellent temper of humanity in *Menelaus*, who thinks the effusion of blood too dear a price for glory. At the same time the Poet gives an admirable picture of human nature, which is restless in the pursuit of what it miscalls happiness, and when in possession of it, neglects it. But the disquiet of *Menelaus* arises not from inconstancy of temper, but wisdom; it shews that all happiness is unsatisfactory.

y. 131. *But oh! Ulysses — &c.*] It is with admirable address that the Poet falls into his subject: it is art, but it seems to be nature: this conduct has a double effect, it takes away all suspicion of flattery, for *Menelaus* is ignorant that the per-

My heart bleeds fresh with agnoizing pain ;  
 The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,  
 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming  
 eyes, 135

When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise.  
 No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,  
 His labours equall'd only by my love :  
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,  
 For him, to suffer, and for me to mourn ! 140  
 Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,  
 Or glides in *Stygian* gloom a pensive ghost,  
 No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,  
 His good old Sire with sorrow to the tomb  
 Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145  
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;

son with whom he discourses is *Telemachus* ; this gives him a manifest evidence of the love he bears to *Ulysses* ; the young man could not but be pleas'd with the praise of his father, and with the sincerity of it. It is also observable, that *Menelaus* builds his friendship for *Ulysses* upon a noble foundation ; I mean the sufferings which *Ulysses* underwent for his friend : *Menelaus* ascribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourse of entertainments, but to a more sincere cause, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In short, the friendship of *Menelaus* and *Ulysses* is the friendship of Heroes. *Eustathius*.

And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,  
Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

While thus pathetick to the Prince he spoke :  
From the brave youth the streaming passion  
broke :

159

Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,  
His face he shrouded with his purple vest :  
The conscious Monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,  
And view'd his filial love with vast surprise :  
Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155  
To hear the youth enquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright *Helen* grac'd the room ;  
Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume,

§. 157. — — — — *bright Helen grac'd the room.*] *Menelaus* conjectured that the person he had entertained was the son of *Ulysses*, from the tears he shed at the name of his father, and from the resemblance there was between *Ulysses* and *Telemachus* ; it might therefore have been expected that *Menelaus* should immediately have acknowledged *Telemachus*, and not delayed a full discovery one moment, out of regard to his absent friend ; but *Menelaus* defers it upon a two-fold account, to give some time to *Telemachus* to indulge his sorrow for his father, and recover himself from it, and also to avoid the repetition of a discovery upon the appearance of *Helen*, who would be curious to know the condition of the strangers.

It may be necessary to say something concerning *Helen*, that fatal beauty that engaged *Greece* and *Asia* in arms ; she is drawn

So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,  
 The silver-shafted Goddess of the Chace! 160  
 The seat of majesty *Adrasfe* brings,  
 With art illustrious, for the pomp of Kings.  
 To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)  
 Of softest woof, is bright *Alcippe's* care.  
 A silver canister divinely wrought, 165  
 In her soft hands the beauteous *Phylo* brought :  
 To *Sparta's* Queen of old the radiant vase  
*Alcandra* gave, a pledge of royal grace :

in the same colours in the *Odyssey* as in the *Iliad*; it is a vicious character, but the colours are so admirably softened by the art of the Poet, that we pardon her infidelity. *Menelaus* is an uncommon instance of conjugal affection, he forgives a wife who had been false to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the Reader might have been shocked at it, and prejudiced against *Helen* as a person that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mentioned to disgrace it: the Poet therefore, to reconcile her to his Reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very strong expressions; she shews true modesty, when she calls herself impudent, and by this conduct we are inclined, like *Menelaus*, to forgive her.

†. 161, &c. *Adrasfe*, *Alcippe*, *Helen's Maids*.] It has been observed, that *Helen* has not the same attendants in the *Odyssey* as she had in the *Iliad*; they perhaps might be *Trojans*, and consequently be left in their own country: or rather, it was an act of prudence in *Menelaus*, not to suffer those servants about her who had been her attendants and confidants in her infidelity. *Eustathius*.

174 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. BOOK IV.

For *Polybus* her Lord, (whose sov'reign sway  
The wealthy tribes of *Pharian Thebes* obey) 170  
When to that court *Atrides* came, carest  
With vast munificence th' imperial guest :  
Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,  
With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd ;  
And bounteous, from the royal treasure told 175  
Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

*Alcandra*, consort of his high command,  
A golden distaff gave to *Helen's* hand ;  
And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,  
Which heap'd with wool the beauteous *Phylo*  
brought : 180

The silken fleece impurpl'd for the loom,  
Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.  
The sovereign seat then *Jove-born Helen* press'd,  
And pleasing thus her scepter'd Lord address'd.

Who grace our palace now, that friendly  
pair, 185  
Speak they their lineage, or their names declare ?  
Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd  
Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.



With wonder wrapt, on yonder cheek I trace  
 The feature of the *Ulyssæan* race : 190  
 Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,  
 In just similitude, the grace and air  
 Of young *Telemachus* ! the lovely boy,  
 Who bless'd *Ulysses* with a father's joy,  
 What-time the *Greeks* combin'd their social  
 arms, 195

T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms !

Just is thy thought, the King assenting cries,  
 Methinks *Ulysses* strikes my wond'ring eyes :  
 Full shines the father in the filial frame,  
 His port, his features, and his shape the same : 200  
 Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow ;  
 Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow !

γ. 192. — — — — the grace and air  
 Of young *Telemachus* ! ——— ]

It may seem strange that *Helen* should at first view recollect the features of *Ulysses* in *Telemachus* ; and that *Menelaus*, who was better acquainted with him, and his constant friend, should not make the same observation. But *Athenæus*, to reconcile this to probability, says, that women are curious and skilful observers of the likeness of children to parents, for one particular reason, that they may, upon finding any dissimilitude, have the pleasure of hinting at the unchastity of others,

And when he heard the long disastrous store  
 Of cares, which in my cause *Ulysses* bore ;  
 Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205  
 Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose :  
 Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,  
 His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confest, *Pisistratus* replies,  
 The genuine worth of *Ithacus* the wise ! 210  
 Of that heroick fire the youth is sprung,  
 But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.  
 Thy voice, O King ! with pleas'd attention heard,  
 Is like the dictates of a God rever'd.

With him at *Nestor's* high command I came, 215  
 Whose age I honour with a parent's name.

By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue  
 For counsel and redress, he sues to you.  
 Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,  
 Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220  
 Still must the wrong'd *Telemachus* sustain,  
 If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain :  
 Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,  
 The youth wou'd vindicate the vacant throne.

Is *Sparta* blest, and these desiring eyes      225  
 View my friend's son? (the King exulting cries)  
 Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,  
 Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd:  
 Mirrour of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd!—  
 When *Troy* was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230  
 No *Greek* an equal space had e'er possess'd,  
 Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.  
 I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,  
 For his abode a Capital prepar'd;  
*Argos* the seat of sovereign rule I chose;      235  
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,  
 Where my *Ulysses* and his race might reign,  
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.  
 To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,  
 With teeming plenty to reward their toil.      240  
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove  
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love:

†. 234. *For his abode a Capital prepar'd.*] The Poet puts these words in the mouth of *Menelaus*, to express the sincerity of his friendship to *Ulysses*; he intended him all advantage, and no detriment: we must therefore conclude, that *Ulysses* was still to retain his sovereignty over *Ithaca*, and only remove to *Argos*, to live with so sincere a friend as *Menelaus*. *Eustathius*.

Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,  
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band !  
 Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys ;  
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys : 246  
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,  
 Fated to wander from his natal coast !  
 He ceas'd ; a gust of grief began to rise ;  
 Fast streams a tide from beauteous *Helen's* eyes ;  
 Fast for the Sire the filial sorrows flow ; 251  
 'The weeping Monarch swells the mighty woe ;  
 Thy cheeks, *Pisistratus*, the tears bedew,  
 While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view

§. 249. — — — a gust of grief began to rise, &c.] It has been observed through the *Iliad*, and may be observed through the whole *Odyssey*, that it was not a disgrace to the greatest Heroes to shed tears ; and indeed I cannot see why it should be an honour to any man, to be able to divest himself of human nature so far as to appear insensible upon the most affecting occasions. No man is born a Stoick : it is art, not nature ; tears are only a shame, when the cause from whence they flow is mean or vicious. Here *Menelaus* laments a friend, *Telemachus* a father, *Pisistratus* a brother : but from what cause arise the tears of *Helen* ? It is to be remembered that *Helen* is drawn in the softest colours in the *Odyssey* ; the character of the adulteress is lost in that of the penitent : the name of *Ulysses* throws her into tears, because she is the occasion of all the sufferings of that brave man ; the Poet makes her the first in sorrow, as she is the cause of all their tears.

Thy martial \* Brother : on the *Phrygian* plain 255

Extended pale, by swarthy *Memnon* slain !

But silence soon the son of *Nestor* broke,

And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

Frequent, O King, was *Nestor* wont to raise

And charm attention with thy copious praise : 260

To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd

The glory of a firm capacious mind :

With that superiour attribute controul

This unavailing impotence of soul.

Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265

Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd :

\* *Antilochus.*

ψ. 265. *Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,  
Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd.]*

It may be asked why sorrow for the dead should be more unseasonable in the evening than the morning? *Eustathius* answers, lest others should look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

“ *Intempestivus venit inter pocula fletus,*

“ *Nec lacrymas dulci fas est miscere falerno.*”

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expression ; the time of feasting was ever looked upon as a time of joy and thanksgiving to the Gods ; it bore a religious veneration among the Ancients, and consequently to shed tears when they should express their gratitude to the Gods with joy, was esteemed a profanation.

But when from dewy shade emerging bright,  
*Aurora* streaks the sky with orient light,  
 Let each deplore his dead : the rites of woe  
 Are all, alas ! the living can bestow : 270  
 O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear  
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.  
 Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,  
 I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,  
 And mourn the brave *Antilochus*, a name 275  
 Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame :  
 With strength and speed superiour form'd, in fight  
 To face the foe, or intercept his flight :  
 Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me !  
 I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280

Young and mature ! the Monarch thus rejoins,  
 In thee renew'd the soul of *Nestor* shines :  
 Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,  
 In early bloom an Oracle of age.  
 Whene'er his influence *Jove* vouchsafes to show'r  
 To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour ; 286  
 From the great fire transmissive to the race,  
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.

Such, happy *Nestor*! was thy glorious doom;  
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom,  
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate; 291  
 The gifts of heaven to guard thy hoary state.  
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,  
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.  
 To move thy suit, *Telemachus*, delay, 295  
 'Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said, *Asphalion* swift the laver brings;  
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs:  
 Then from the rites of purity repair,  
 And with keen gust the fav'ry viands share. 300  
 Meantime with genial joy to warm the soul,  
 Bright *Helen* mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl:

§. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl, &c.* The conjectures about this cordial of *Helen* have been almost infinite. Some, take *Nepenthes* allegorically, to signify History, Musick or Philosophy. *Plutarch* in the first of the *Symposiacks* affirms it to be, discourse well suiting the present passions and conditions of the hearers. *Macrobius* is of the same opinion, *Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ succus, sed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hospitem mæroris oblitum flexit ad gaudium.* What gave a foundation to this fiction of *Homer*, as *Dacier* observes, might be this. *Diodorus* writes that in *Ægypt*, and chiefly at *Heliopolis*, the same with *Thebes*, where *Menelaus* sojourned, as has been already observed, there lived women who boasted of certain potions,

Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage  
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage ;

which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the most violent sallies of grief or anger. *Eusebius* directly affirms, that even in his time the women of *Diospolis* were able to calm the rage of grief or anger by certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates *Homer*, since a Poet may make use of a prevailing, though false opinion.

*Milton* mentions this *Nepenthes* in his excellent Masque of *Comus*.

— — — Behold this cordial Julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds !  
Not that *Nepenthes* which the wife of *Thone*  
In *Ægypt* gave to *Jove-born Helena*,  
Is of such pow'r as this to stir up joy,  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

But that there may be something more than fiction in this is very probable, since the *Ægyptians* were so notoriously skilled in physick ; and particularly since this very *Thon*, or *Thonis*, or *Thoon*, is reported by the Ancients to have been the inventor of physick among the *Ægyptians*. The description of this *Nepenthes* agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of *Opium*.

It is further said of *Thon*, that he was King of *Canopus*, and entertained *Menelaus* hospitably before he had seen *Helen* ; but afterwards falling in love with her, and offering violence, he was slain by *Menelaus*. From his name the *Ægyptians* gave the name of *Thoth* to the first month of their year, and also to a city the name of *Thonis*. *Ælian* writes, that *Menelaus*, when he travelled to the *Æthiopians*, committed *Helen* to the protection of *Thonis* ; that she fell in love with him, that *Polydamna* growing jealous confined her to the Island of *Pharos*, but gave her an herb to preserve her from the poison of serpents, there frequent, which from *Helen* was called *Helenium*.



To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled Care, 305  
And dry the tearful sluices of Despair :

Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted  
mind

All sense of woe delivers to the wind.

Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,  
Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310

Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian-force,  
Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse ;

From morn to eve, impassive and serene,  
The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene.

These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315  
Bright *Helen* learn'd from *Thone's* imperial wife ;

Who sway'd the scepter, where prolifick *Nile*  
With various simples clothes the fat'ned soil.

*Strabo* writes, that at *Canopus*, on the mouth of the *Nile*, there stands a city named *Thonies*, from King *Thonis*, who received *Helen* and *Menelaus*. *Herodotus* relates, that *Thonis* was Governour of *Canopus*, that he represented the injury which *Paris* had done to *Menelaus*, to *Proteus* who reigned in *Memphis*. *Eustathius*.

This last remark from *Herodotus* is sufficient to shew, that *Homer* is not so fictitious as is generally imagined, that there really was a King named *Proteus*, that the Poet builds his fables upon truth, and that it was truth that originally determined *Homer* to introduce *Proteus* into his Poetry ; but I intend to explain this more largely in the story of *Proteus*.

With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane  
Of vegetable venom, taints the plain; 320

From *Pæon* sprung, their patron-god imparts  
To all the *Pharian* race his healing arts.

The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,  
The circle thus the beauteous *Queen* address'd.

Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest *Jove* 325  
Tempers the fates of human race above;

By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,  
Alternate are decreed our good and ill.

To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,  
And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330

Myself assisting in the social joy,

Will tell *Ulysses'* bold exploit in *Troy*:

Sole witness of the deed I now declare;

Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.

§. 331. *Myself* — — — —

*Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit* — —]

What is here related shews the necessity of the introduction of *Helen*, and the use the Poet makes of it: she is not brought in merely as a *muta persona*, to fill up the number of persons; but she relates several incidents, in which she herself was concerned, and which she could only know; and consequently not only diversifies, but carries on the design of the story. *Eustathius*.

Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own fa-  
bre gave, 335

In the vile habit of a village-slave,

ψ. 335: *Seam'd o'er with wounds, &c.*] The Poet here shews his judgment in passing over many instances of the sufferings of *Ulysses*, and relating this piece of conduct, not mentioned by any other Author. The art of *Ulysses* in extricating himself from difficulties is laid down as the ground-work of the Poem, he is *πολύτροπος*, and this is an excellent example of it. This further shews the necessity of the appearance of *Helen*, no other person being acquainted with the story. If this stratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the resemblance of it; and *Megabysus* the *Persian* (as *Eustathius* observes) practised it, as we learn from history. We may reasonably conjecture that *Ulysses* was committed to *Helen*, in hopes that he would discover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other person; for what could be more agreeable to a *Greek*, than to be committed to the care of a *Greek*, as *Ulysses* was to *Helen*? By the same conduct the Poet raises the character of *Helen*, by making her shew her repentance by an act of generosity to her countryman. The original says she gave an oath to *Ulysses* not to discover him before he was in safety in the *Grecian* army: now this does not imply that she ever discovered to the *Trojans* that *Ulysses* had entered *Troy*: the contrary opinion is most probable; for it cannot be imagined but all *Troy* must have been incensed greatly against her, had they known that she had concealed one of their mortal enemies, and dismissed him in safety: it was sufficient for *Ulysses* to take her oath that she would not discover him, till he was in security: he left her future conduct to her own discretion. It is probable that she furnished *Ulysses* with a sword, for in his return he slew many *Trojans*: he came to *Troy*, observes *Eustathius*, in rags, and like a slave; and to have concealed a sword, would have endangered his life upon a discovery of it, and given strong suspicions of an impostor.

The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,  
 In *Troy* to mingle with the hostile train.  
 In this attire secure from searching eyes,  
 'Till haply piercing thro' the dark disguise 340  
 The Chief I challeng'd ; he, whose practis'd wit  
 Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,  
 Eludes my search : but when his form I view'd  
 Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,  
 His limbs in military purple dress'd ; 345  
 Each brightning grace the genuine *Greek* confess'd.

A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,  
 'Till he the lines and *Argive* fleet regain'd,  
 To keep his stay conceal'd ; the chief declar'd  
 The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350  
 Exploring then the secrets of the state,  
 He learn'd what best might urge the *Dardan* fate :

§. 351. *Exploring then the secrets of the state.*] The word *ῥέων* is here used in a large sense : it takes in all the observations *Ulysses* made during his continuance in *Troy*, it takes in the designs and counsels of the enemy, his measuring the gates, the height of the walls, the easiest place for an assault or ambush, the taking away the *Paliadum*, or whatever else a wise man may be supposed to observe, or act, in execution of such a stratagem. *Eustathius*.

And safe returning to the *Grecian* host,  
 Sent many a shade to *Pluto's* dreary coast.  
 Loud grief resounded thro' the tow'rs of *Troy*, 355  
 But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy :  
 For then with dire remorse, and conscious  
 shame,

I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,  
 Which kindled by th' imperious Queen of love,  
 Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove: 360  
 And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd  
 My absent Daughter, and my dearer Lord ;  
 Admir'd among the first of human race,  
 For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

§. 357. *For then with dire remorse, &c.*] The conclusion of this speech is very artful: *Helen* ascribes her seduction to *Venus*, and mentions nothing of *Paris*. Instead of naming *Troy*, she conceals it, and only says she was carried thither, leaving *Troy* to the imagination of *Menelaus*; she suffers not herself to mention names so odious now to herself, and ever to *Menelaus* as *Paris* and *Troy*. She compliments *Menelaus* very handsomely, and says, that he wanted no accomplishment either in mind or body: it being the nature of man not to resent the injuries of a wife so much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference she gives to another person; he looks upon such a preference as the most affecting part of the injury. *Eustathius*.

Right well, reply'd the King, your speech displays  
365

The matchless merit of the chief you praise :  
Heroes in various climes myself have found,  
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renowned :

But *Ithacus*, unrival'd in his claim,  
May boast a title to the loudest fame : 370  
In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,  
Wife to resolve, and patient to perform.  
What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,

When the vast fabrick of the Steed we rear'd !

‡. 365. *Menelaus's answer.*] The judgment of the Poet in continuing the story concerning *Ulysses* is not observed by any Commentator. *Ulysses* is the chief Hero of the Poem, every thing should have a reference to him, otherwise the narration stands still without any advance towards the conclusion of it. The Poet therefore to keep *Ulysses* in our minds, dwells upon his sufferings and adventures : he supplies his not appearing in the present scene of action, by setting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour upon our observation. He uses the same art and judgment with relation to *Achilles* in the *Iliad* : the Hero of the Poem is absent from the chief Scenes of action during much of the time which that Poem comprises, but he is continually brought into the mind of the Reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom, 375  
Urg'd you with great *Deiphobus* to come,

‡. 375. *Some Dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom.*] It is the observation of *Eustathius*, that these words are very artfully introduced to vindicate *Helen*; they imply that what she acted was by compulsion, and to evidence this more clearly, *Deiphobus* is given her for an attendant, as a spy upon her actions, that she might not conceal any thing that should happen, but act her part well, by endeavouring to deceive the *Greeks* in favour of *Troy*. It is the Dæmon, not *Helen*, that is in fault; this, continues *Eustathius*, answers many objections that lie against *Helen*: for if she was a real penitent, as she herself affirms, how comes she to endeavour to deceive the *Greeks* by the disguise of her voice, into more misery than had yet arisen from a ten years war? Or indeed is it credible that any person could modulate her voice so artfully as to resemble so many voices? And how could the *Greeks* inclosed in the wooden horse believe that their wives who were in *Greece*, could be arrived in so short a space as they had been concealed there, from the various regions of *Greece*, and meet together in *Troy*? Would the wives of these Heroes come into an enemy's country, when the whole army, except these latent Heroes, were retired from it? this is ridiculous and impossible. I must confess there is great weight in these objections: but *Eustathius* answers all by the interposition of the Dæmon; and by an idle tradition that *Helen* had the name of *Echo*, from the faculty of mimicking sounds; and that this gift was bestowed upon her by *Venus* when she married *Menelaus*, that she might be able to detect him, if he should prove false to her bed, by imitating the voice of the suspected person, (but *Menelaus* had more occasion for this faculty than *Helen*.) As for the excuse of the Dæmon, it equally excuses all crimes: for instance, was *Helen* false to *Menelaus*? The Dæmon occasioned it: does she act an impostor to destroy all her *Grecian* friends, and even *Menelaus*? The Dæmon compels her to it: the Dæmon compels her to

T'explore the fraud ; with guile oppos'd to guile,  
Slow-pacing thrice around th' insidious pile ;

go with *Deiphobus*, to surround the horse thrice, to sound the sides of it, to endeavour to surprise the latent *Greeks* by an imitation of the voices of their wives, and in short, to act like a person that was very sincere in mischief.

*Dacier* takes another course, and gives up *Helen*, but remarks the great address of *Menelaus*. *Helen* had, said she, long desired nothing so much as to return to *Lacedæmon* ; and her heart had long been wholly turned to *Menelaus* : *Menelaus* is not at all convinced of this pretended sincerity ; but it would have been too gross, after he had taken her again to his bed, to convict her of falshood ; he therefore contents himself barely to reply, that some *Dæmon*, an enemy to the *Greeks*, had forced her to a conduct disagreeable to her sincerity. This (continues *Dacier*) is an artful, but severe irony.

As for the objection concerning the impossibility of the *Greeks* believing their wives could be in *Troy* ; she answers, that the Authors of this objection have not sufficiently considered human nature. The voice of a beloved person might of a sudden, and by surprise, draw from any person a word involuntary, before he has time to make reflection. This undoubtedly is true, where circumstances make an imposture probable ; but here is an impossibility ; it is utterly impossible to believe the wives of these Heroes could be in *Troy*. Besides, *Menelaus* himself tells us, that even he had fallen into the snare, but *Ulysses* prevented it ; this adds to the incredibility of the story ; for if this faculty of mimicry was given upon his marriage with *Helen*, it was nothing new to him ; he must be supposed to be acquainted with it, and consequently be the less liable to surprise : nay it is not impossible, but the experiment might have been made upon him before *Helen* fled away with *Paris*.

In short, I think this passage wants a further vindication ; the circumstances are low, if not incredible. *Virgil*, the great imitator of *Homer*, has given us a very different and



Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,  
 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke : 380  
 The pleasing sounds each latent warrior  
                   warm'd,

But most *Tyrides*' and my heart alarm'd :  
 To quit the steed we both impatient press,  
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.  
 Unmov'd the mind of *Ithacus* remain'd : 385  
 And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd ;  
 But *Anticlus* unable to controul,  
 Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul :  
*Ulysses* straight with indignation fir'd,  
 (For so the common care of *Greece* requir'd) 390  
 Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,  
 'Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd.

more noble description of the destruction of *Troy* : he has not thought fit to imitate him in this description.

If we allow *Helen* to act by compulsion, to have feared the *Trojans*, and that *Deiphobus* was sent as a spy upon her actions ; yet this is no vindication of her conduct : she still acts a mean part, and through fear becomes an accomplice in endeavouring to betray and ruin the *Greeks*.

I shall just add, that after the death of *Paris*, *Helen* marries *Deiphobus* ; that the story of the wooden horse is probably founded upon the taking of *Troy* by an engine called a Horse, as the like engine was called a Ram by the *Romans*.

Meantime *Minerva* from the fraudulent horse,  
Back to the court of *Priam* bent your course.

Inclement fate ! *Telemachus* replies, 395

Frail is the boasted attribute of wise :

The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,

Is in the common mass of matter lost !

But now let sleep the painful waste repair

Of sad reflection, and corroding care. 400

He ceas'd ; the menial fair that round her wait,

At *Helen's* beck prepare the room of state ;

Beneath an ample Portico, they spread

The downy fleece to form the slumb'rous bed ;

And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405

Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold :

Then thro' th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest

Th' obsequious Herald guides each princely guest :

While to his regal bow'r the King ascends,

And beauteous *Helen* on her Lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple drest,

Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate East,

The Monarch rose ; magnificent to view,

Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw :

The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulder cast, 415

A starry falchion low-depending grac'd ;

Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine ;

And forth he moves, majestick and divine :

Instant to young *Telemachus* he press'd,

And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report

What cause hath led you to the *Spartan* court ?

Do publick or domestick cares constrain

This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main ?

O highly-favour'd delegate of *Jove* ! 425

(Replies the Prince) inflam'd with filial love,

And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,

A suppliant to your royal court I come.

Our sov'reign feat a lewd usurping race

With lawless riot, and mis-rule disgrace ; 430

To pamper'd insolence devoted fall

Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall :

For wild ambition wings their bold desire,

And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.

But prostrate I implore, oh King ! relate 435

The mournful series of my father's fate :

Each known disaster of the Man disclose,  
 Born by his mother to a world of woes !  
 Recite them ! nor in erring pity fear  
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear : 440  
 If e'er *Ulysses*, to reclaim your right,  
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,  
 If *Phrygian* camps the friendly toils attest,  
 To the fire's merit give the son's request.

Deep from his inmost soul *Atrides* sigh'd, 445  
 And thus indignant to the Prince reply'd :  
 Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard  
 train

An absent hero's nuptial joys profane !

‡. 447. *Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train.* *Menelaus* is fired with indignation at the injuries offered his friend by the Suitors : he breaks out into an exclamation, and in a just contempt vouchsafes not to mention them : he thinks he fully distinguishes whom he intends, by calling them ἀνδραῖδες αἰετοί, *those cowards*. The comparison which he introduces is very just, they are the Fawns, *Ulysses* is the Lion.

This is the first simile that *Homer* has inserted in the *Odyssey* ; but I cannot think it proceeded from a barrenness of invention, or through phlegm in the declension of his years, as some have imagined. The nature of the Poem requires a difference of style from the *Iliad* ! The *Iliad* rushes along like a torrent ; the *Odyssey* flows greatly on like a deep stream, with a smooth tranquillity ; *Achilles* is all fire, *Ulysses* all wisdom.

So with her young, amid the woodland shades,  
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450  
 Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,  
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns :  
 Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway  
 The monarch-savage rends the trembling prey.  
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455  
*Ulysses* soon shall re-assert his claim.

O *Jove*, supreme, whom Gods and men revere !  
 And \* thou, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the  
 sphere!

With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid  
 The chief adopted by the Martial maid ! 460

The simile in *Homer* is really beautiful ; but in *Hobbs* ridiculous.

As when a stag and hind ent'ring the den  
 Of th' absent Lion, lulls his whelps with tales,  
 Of hills and dales ; the Lion comes agen,  
 And tears them into pieces with his nails.

Can any thing be more foreign to the sense of *Homer*, or worse translated ? He construes *κεῖναι ἐξέειπεν*, by telling stories of hills and dales to the Lion's whelps, instead of *fuga investigat* : but such mistakes are so frequent in *Hobbs*, that one would almost suspect his learning in *Greek* : he has disgraced the best Poet, and a very great Historian ; *Homer*, and *Thucydides*.

\* *Apollo*.

Such to our wish the warriour soon restore,  
 As when contending on the *Lesbian* shore  
 His prowess *Philomelides* confess'd,  
 And loud-acclaiming *Greeks* the victor blest'd :  
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465  
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.  
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend  
 The storied labours of thy father's friend :  
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,  
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue : 470  
 Learn what I heard the sea-born Seer relate,  
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of Fate.

Long on th' *Ægyptian* coast by calms confin'd,  
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind :  
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain ! 475  
 For this the Gods each fav'ring gale restrain :  
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd ;  
 Severe, if men th' eternal rights evade.

‡. 462. *As when contending on the Lesbian shore.*] The Poet here gives an account of one of *Ulysses's* adventures. *Philomelides* was King of *Lesbos*, and *Eustathius* observes, that there was a tradition that *Ulysses* and *Diomedes* slew him, and turned a stately monument he had raised for himself into a publick place for the reception of strangers.

High o'er a gulfy sea, the *Pharian* isle

Fronts the deep roar of difemboguing *Nile* : 480

\*. 479. — [*The Pharian Isle.*] This description of *Pharos* has given great trouble to the Criticks and Geographers ; it is generally concluded, that the distance of *Pharos* is about seven stadia from *Alexandria* ; *Ammianus Marcellinus* mentions this very passage thus ; l. xxii. *Insula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocarum gregibus diversatum Homerus fabulatur inflatus, à civitatis littore mille passibus disparata*, or, *about a mile distant from the shores*. How then comes *Homer* to affirm it to be distant a full day's sail ? *Dacier* answers, that *Homer* might have heard that the *Nile*, continually bringing down much earthy substance, had enlarged the continent : and knowing it not to be so distant in his time, took the liberty of a Poet, and described it as still more distant in the days of *Menelaus*. But *Dacier* never sees a mistake in *Homer*. Had his Poetry been worse if he had described the real distance of *Pharos* ? It is allowable in a Poet to disguise the truth, to adorn his story ; but what ornament has he given his Poetry by this enlargement ? *Bochart* has fully proved that there is no accession to the Continent from any substance that the *Nile* brings down with it : the violent agitation of the seas prohibit it from lodging, and forming itself into solidity. *Eratosthenes* is of opinion, that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile* : but *Strabo* answers, that his silence about them is not an argument of his ignorance, for neither has he ever mentioned where he was born. But *Strabo* does not enter fully into the meaning of *Eratosthenes* : *Eratosthenes* does not mean that *Homer* was ignorant of the mouths of *Nile* from his silence, but because he places *Pharos* at the distance of a whole day's sail from the Continent. The only way to unite this inconsistency is to suppose, that the Poet intended to specify the *Pelusiæ* mouth of *Nile*, from which *Pharos* stands about a day's sail : but this is submitted to the Criticks.

I cannot tell whether one should venture to make use of the word *Nile* in the translation, it is doubtless an Anachronism ;

Her distance from the shore, the course begun  
 At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,  
 A galley measures; when the stiffer gales  
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.  
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lye, 485  
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

And now the twentieth sun descending, laves  
 His glowing axle in the western waves;  
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain  
 Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main: 490  
 And the pale mariner at once deplores  
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.  
 When lo! a bright cœrulean form appears,  
 The fair *Eidothea*! to dispel my fears;

that name being unknown in the times of *Homer* and *Mene-laüs*, when the *Nile* was called *Ægyptus*. *Homer* in this very book

— — — Αἰγύπτιος Διὶ πατρίδι ποταμῖον.

Yet on the other hand, this name of *Ægyptus* is so little known, that a common Reader would scarce distinguish the river from the country; and indeed universal custom has obtained for using the *Latin* name instead of the *Grecian*, in many other instances which are equally Anachronisms: witness all the names of the Gods and Goddesses throughout *Homer*; *Jupiter* for *Zeus*, *Juno* for *Erè*, *Neptune* for *Poseidon*, &c.



*Proteus* her fire divine. With pity press'd, 495

Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd ;

What-time with hunger pin'd, my absent  
mates

Roam the wild Isle in search of rural cates,

Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood

Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

Whoe'er thou art (the azure Goddess cries)

Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wife :

‡. 499. *Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood.*] *Melenaeus* says, hunger was so violent among his companions, that they were compelled to eat fish. *Plutarch* in his *Symposiacks* observes; that among the *Syrians* and *Greeks*, to abstain from fish was esteemed a piece of sanctity ; that though the *Greeks* were encamped upon the *Hellepont*, there is not the least intimation that they eat fish, or any sea provision ; and that the companions of *Ulysses*, in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, never sought for fish till all their other provisions were consumed, and that the same necessity compelled them to eat the herds of the Sun which induced them to taste fish. No fish is ever offered in sacrifice : the *Pythagoreans* in particular command fish not to be eaten more strictly than any other animal : fish afford no excuse at all for their destruction, they live as it were in another world, disturb not our air, consume not our fruits, or injure the waters ; and therefore the *Pythagoreans*, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all on fishes. I thought it necessary to insert this from *Plutarch*, because it is an observation that explains other passages in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,  
 That here inglorious on a barren coast  
 Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train 505  
 With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain?

Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply ;  
 Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,

A Goddess sure ! for more than mortal grace  
 Speaks thee descendant of ætherial race : 510

Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains ;  
 Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains :

O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,  
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view?)

What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas ? 515

What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease ?

I ceas'd, when affable the Goddess cry'd ;  
 Observe, and in the truths I speak confide :

Th' orac'lous Seer frequents the *Pharian* coast,  
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast : 520

*Proteus*, a name tremendous o'er the main,  
 The delegate of *Neptune's* wat'ry reign.

γ. 521. *Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main.*] *Eustathius* enumerates various opinions concerning *Proteus*; some understand *Proteus* allegorically to signify the first matter

Watch with insidious care his known abode ;  
There fast in chains constrain the various God :

which undergoes all changes ; others make him an emblem of true friendship, which ought not to be settled till it has been tried in all shapes : others make *Proteus* a picture of a flatterer, who takes up all shapes, and suits himself to all forms, in compliance to the temper of the person whom he courts. The *Greeks* (observes *Diodorus*) imagined all these metamorphoses of *Proteus*, to have been borrowed from the practices of the *Egyptian* Kings, who were accustomed to wear the figures of Lions, Bulls or Dragons in their diadems, as emblems of Royalty, and sometimes that of Trees, &c. not so much for ornament as terrour. Others took *Proteus* to be an enchanter ; and *Eustathius* recounts several that were eminent in this art, as *Cratisthenes* the *Phliasian* (which *Dacier* renders by mistake *Calisthenes* the *Physician*) who when he pleased could appear all on fire, and assume other appearances to the astonishment of the spectators : such also was *Xenophon*, *Scymnus* of *Tarentum*, *Philippides* of *Syracuse*, *Heraclitus* of *Mitylene*, and *Nymphodorus*, all practisers of magical arts ; and *Eustathius* recites that the *Phocæ* were made use of in their incantations. Some write that *Proteus* was an *Egyptian* tumbler, who could throw himself into variety of figures and postures ; others, a Stage-player ; others, that he was a great General, skilled in all the arts and stratagems of war : *Dacier* looks upon him to have been an enchanter, or *Σαυματοποιός*. It is certain from *Herodotus*, that there was in the times of *Menelaus*, a King named *Proteus*, who reigned in *Memphis* ; that *Egypt* was always remarkable for those who excelled in magical arts ; thus *Jannes* and *Jambres* changed, at least in appearance, a rod into a Serpent, and water into blood : it is not therefore improbable but that *Menelaus*, hearing of him while he was in *Egypt*, went to consult him as an Enchanter, which kind of men always pretended to foreknow events : this perhaps was the real foundation of the whole story concerning *Proteus* ; the rest is the

Who bound, obedient to superiour force, 525  
Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.

If studious of your realms, you then demand  
Their state, since last you left your natal land ;  
Instant the God obsequious will disclose  
Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530

She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply ;  
O Goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely :  
Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,  
What arts can captivate the changeful Seer ?  
For perilous th' assay, unheard the toil, 535  
T' elude the prescience of a God by guile.

Thus to the Goddess mild my suit I end.  
Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend :  
When thro' the Zone of heav'n the mounted sun  
Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540  
The Seer, while Zephyrs curl the swelling deep,  
Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,  
His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,  
The *Phocæ* swift surround his rocky cave,

fiction and embellishment of the Poet, who ascribes to  
his *Proteus* whatever the credulity of men usually ascribes to  
Enchanters.

Frequent and full; the consecrated train 545

Of \* her, whose azure trident awes the main:

There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales  
An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.

To that recess, commodious for surprise,

When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550

With me repair; and from thy warrior band

Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command:

Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,

For strong the God, and perfected in guile.

Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555

The flouncing herd ascending from the seas;

Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound

The scaly charge their guardian God surround:

So with his batt'ning flocks the careful swain

Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560

With pow'rs united, obstinately bold

Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold;

Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,

The mimick force of ev'ry savage shape:

\* *Amphitrite.*

Or glides with liquid lapse a' murmur'ing stream;  
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb: 566  
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might  
 Thro' each' vain passive form constrain his flight.  
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands  
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands; 570  
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,  
 And soothe the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.  
 The bands relax'd, implore the Seer to say  
 What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?  
 Who straight propitious, in prophetick strain 575  
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.  
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelfy shore,  
 Round the descending nymph the waves re-  
 bounding roar.

High wrapt in wonder of the future deed,  
 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed: 580  
 The wants of nature with repast suffice,  
 'Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,

ψ. 569. *But when, his native shape resum'd, &c.*] This is founded upon the practice of Enchanters, who never give their answers, till they have astonished the imagination of those who consult them with their juggling delusions. *Dacier.*

And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,  
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep, 584  
 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn,  
 In saffron robes the the daughter of the dawn  
 Advanc'd her rosy steps; before the bay,  
 Due ritual honours to the Gods I pay;  
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,  
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590  
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand  
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand:  
 Then from her azure car, the finny spoils  
 Of four vast *Phocæ* takes, to veil her wiles:  
 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone, 595  
 Hard toil! the prophet's piercing eye to shun;  
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse  
 Unfavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze:  
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,  
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd. 600  
 Thus 'till the sun had travell'd half the skies,  
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise:  
 When thronging quick to bask in open air,  
 The flocks of Ocean to the strand repair:

Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep: 605  
 Then *Proteus* mounting from the hoary deep,  
 Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :  
 (In order told, we make the sum compleat.)  
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,  
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610  
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare  
 A furious onset with the sound of war,  
 And shouting seize the God : our force t' evade  
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :  
 A Lion now, he curls a surgy mane ; 615  
 Sudden, our bands a spotted Pard restrain ;

\*. 613. *And shouting seize the God : —*] *Proteus* has, through the whole story, been described as a God who knew all things ; it may then be asked, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was designed against his own person ? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew *Menelaus* without information, should not know that he lay in ambush to seize him ? The only answer that occurs to me is, that these enchanters never pretend to have an inherent fore-knowledge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourse to the secrets of their profession ; so that *Proteus* having no suspicion, had not consulted his art, and consequently might be surpris'd by *Menelaus* : so far is agreeable to the pretensions of such deluders : the Poet indeed has drawn him in colours stronger than life ; but Poetry adds or detracts at pleasure, and is allowed frequently to step out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the story.



Then arm'd with tusks, and light'ning in his eyes,  
A Boar's obscener shape the God belies :

On spiry volumes, there, a Dragon rides ;  
Here, from our strict embrace a Stream he glides :  
And last, sublime his stately growth he rears, 621  
A Tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.

Vain efforts ! with superiour pow'r compress'd,  
Me with reluctance thus the Seer address'd.  
Say, son of *Atræus*, say what God inspir'd 625  
This daring fraud, and what the boon desir'd ?

I thus ; O thou, whose certain eye foresees  
The fix'd event of Fate's remote decrees ;  
After long woes, and various toil endur'd,  
Still on this desert Isle my fleet is moor'd ; 630  
Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing ! say,  
What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?  
What vows repentant will the Pow'r appease,  
To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas ?

To *Jove* (with stern regard the God replies) 635  
And all th' offended synod of the skies,

†. 635. To *Jove* ——— *Just becatombs* ——— &c.] *Ho-*  
*mer* continually inculcates morality, and piety to the Gods ;  
he gives in this place a great instance of the necessity of it,

Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,  
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain,  
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend!  
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640  
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome  
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.  
 Once more the *Nile*, who from the secret source  
 Of *Jove's* high seat descends with sweepy force,  
 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645  
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.

*Menelaus* cannot succeed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the Gods; the neglect of sacrifice is the occasion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future prosperity.

†. 643. — — — *Nile, who from the secret source  
 Of Jove's high seat descends ———*]

*Homer*, it must be confessed, gives the epithet *Διῶν*, generally to all rivers; if he has used it here peculiarly, there might have been room to have imagined that he had been acquainted with the true cause of the inundations of this famous river: the word *Διῶν* implies it: for it is now generally agreed, that these prodigious inundations proceed from the vast rains and the melting of the snows on the mountains of the Moon in *Æthiopia*, about the autumnal *Æquinox*; when those rains begin to fall, the river by degrees increases, and as they abate, it decreases; the word *Διῶν* is therefore peculiarly proper when applied to the *Nile*; for though all rivers depend upon the waters that fall from the air, or *ἐκ Διὸς*, yet the *Nile* more especially; for when the rain ceases, the *Nile* consists only of seven empty channels.

Then will the Gods, with holy pomp ador'd,  
To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd : heart-wounded with afflictive  
pain;

(Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650

A shelfy tract, and long!) O Seer, I cry,

To the stern sanction of th' offended sky.

My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,

What fate propitious, or what dire dismay

Sustain those Peers, the reliques of our host, 655

Whom I with *Nestor* on the *Phrygian* coast

Embracing left? Must I the warriors weep,

Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous  
deep?

Or did the kind domestick friend deplore

The breathless heroes on their native shore? 660

Prefs not too far, reply'd the God; but cease

To know, what known will violate thy peace:

Too curious of their doom! with friendly woe

Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.

Part live! the rest, a lamentable train! 665

Range the dark bounds of *Phro's* dreary reign.

Two, foremost in the roll of *Mars* renown'd,  
 Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were  
 crown'd,

Fell by disastrous fate; by tempests tost,  
 A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670

By *Neptune* rescu'd from *Minerva's* hate,  
 On *Gyræ*, safe *Oilean Ajax* sat,  
 His ship o'erwhelm'd; but frowning on the floods,  
 Impious he roar'd defiance to the Gods;  
 To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675  
 The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.  
 This heard the raging Ruler of the main;  
 His spear, indignant for such high disdain,  
 He lanch'd; dividing with his forky mace  
 Th' aerial summit from the marble base: 680  
 The rock rush'd sea-ward with impetuous roar  
 Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

ψ. 682. — — and to th' abyss the boaster bore.] It is in the original, *He died, having drunk the salt water*. This verse has been omitted in many editions of *Homer*; and the Ancients, says *Eustathius*, blame *Aristarchus* for not marking it as a verse that ought to be rejected; the simplicity of it consists in the sense, more than in the terms, and it is unworthy of *Proteus* to treat the death of *Ajax* with pleasantry, as he seems to do, by adding *having drunk salt water*: but why may not *Proteus*

By *Juno's* guardian aid, the wat'ry Vast  
 Secure of storms, your Royal brother past :  
 'Till coasting nigh the Cape, where *Malea* shrouds  
 Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds ; 686  
 A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore,  
 Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.  
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,  
 Where late in regal pomp *Thyestes* reign'd ; 690  
 But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,  
*Ægythus* govern'd in paternal state.  
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends ;  
 From his tall ship the King of men descends :  
 There fondly thinks the Gods conclude his toil !  
 Far from his own domain salutes the foil : 696  
 With rapture oft' the verge of *Greece* reviews,  
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.

be supposed to be serious, and the term *Ἀλμυρὸν ὕδαρ*, to imply no more than that he was drowned in the waves of the ocean ? I know only one reason that can give any colour to the objection, *viz.* its being possibly become a vulgar expression, and used commonly in a ludicrous sense ; then indeed it is to be avoided in Poetry, but it does not follow, because perhaps it might be used in this manner in the days of these Criticks, that therefore it was so used in the days of *Homer*. What was poetical in the time of the Poet, might be grown vulgar in the time of the Criticks.

Him thus exulting on the distant strand,  
 A Spy distinguish'd from his airy stand; 700  
 To bribe whose vigilance, *Ægisthus* told  
 A mighty sum of ill persuading gold:  
 There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,  
 'Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale  
     career;

And now admonish'd by his eye, to court 705  
 With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.  
 Of deathful arts expert, his Lord employs  
 The ministers of blood in dark surprise;  
 And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,  
 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he  
     plac'd. 710

Then bids prepare the hospitable treat:  
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon-hate!  
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,  
 A train of courfers, and triumphal cars  
 Magnificent he leads: the Royal guest 715  
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.  
 The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,  
 With homicidal rage the King oppresses!

So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,  
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720  
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,  
 Around their Lord, a mighty ruin! lie:  
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed;  
*Ægysthus* sole survives to boast the deed.

He said; chill horrors shook my shiv'ring  
 soul, 725  
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll;  
 And hate, in madness of extreme despair,  
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.  
 But when superiour to the rage of woe,  
 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow; 730  
 Lenient of grief, the pitying God began —  
 Forget the brother, and resume the man:  
 To Fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,  
 That care be Fate's, a speedy passage thine.

γ. 719. *So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall, &c.*] *Dacier* translates βῆρ, by *taureau*, a bull; and misunderstands *Eustathius*, who directly says, that in the second *Iliad* the Poet compares *Agamemnon* to a bull, in this place to an ox, ταύρω ἄκασιν ὣν δὲ βῆρ αὐτὸν ὁμοίωσιν. The one was undoubtedly designed to describe the courage and majestic port of a warrior, the other to give us an image of a Prince falling in full peace and plenty, ὡς βῆρ ἐνὶ φάτῃ.

Still lives the wretch who wrought the death  
deplor'd, 735

But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword ;  
Unless with filial rage *Orestes* glow,  
And swift prevent the meditated blow :  
You timely will return a welcome guest,  
With him to share the sad funeral feast. 740

He said : new thoughts my beating heart employ,  
My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.  
Fair hope revives ; and eager I address  
The prescient Godhead to reveal the rest.  
The doom decreed of those disastrous Two 745  
I've heard with pain, but oh ! the tale pursue ;  
What third brave son of *Mars* the Fates constrain  
To roam the howling desert of the main :  
Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,  
Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

†. 749. *Or in eternal shade if cold he lies.*] *Proteus* in the beginning of his Relation had said, that *one person was alive, and remained enclosed by the ocean* : how then comes *Menelaus* here to say, Give me an account of that other person who is alive, or dead ? Perhaps the sorrow which *Menelaus* conceived for his friend *Ulysses*, might make him fear the worst ; and *Proteus* adding, *enclosed by the ocean*, might give a suspicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity.



That chief (rejoin'd the God) his race derives  
From *Ithaca*, and wond'rous woes survives ;

However this be, it sets the friendship of *Menelaus* in a strong light : where friendship is sincere, a state of uncertainty is a state of fears, we dread even possibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this, one of the finest compliments that a Poet ever made to a patron turns, that of *Horace* to *Mæcenas*, in the first of the *Epodes*.

It may not perhaps be disagreeable to the Reader to observe, that *Virgil* has borrowed this story of *Proteus* from *Homer*, and translated it almost literally. *Rapin* says, that *Homer's* description is more ingenious and fuller of invention, but *Virgil's* more judicious. I wish that Critick had given his reasons for his opinion. I believe in general, the plan of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is allowed by the best of Criticks to be more perfect than that of the *Æneis*. *Homer*, with respect to the unity of time, has the advantage very manifestly : *Rapin* confesses it, and *Aristotle* proposes him as an example to all Epick Authors. Where then is the superiority of judgment? Is it that there are more fabulous, I mean incredible, stories in *Homer* than *Virgil*? as that of the *Cyclops*, the ships of *Alcinous*, &c. *Virgil* has imitated most of these bold fables, and the story of the ships of *Alcinous* is not more incredible than the transformation of the ships of *Æneas*. But this is too large a subject to be discussed in the compass of these Annotations. In particular passages I freely allow the preference to *Virgil*, as in the descent of *Æneas* into hell, &c. but in this story of *Proteus*, I cannot see any superiority of judgment. *Virgil* is little more than a translator ; to shew the particulars would be too tedious : I refer it to the Reader to compare the two Authors, and shall only instance in one passage.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αἰψ' ἰάχοντες ἐπισσώμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ χυῖρας  
βάλλομεν· ἐδ' ὁ γέρον δολίῃς ἐπιλήθλο τέχνης,  
Ἄλλ' ἤτοι σπῶντις αἰὼν γένετ' ἠγέμεναι,  
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων, καὶ πᾶρδαλις, ἠδὲ μέγας οὖς,  
Γυνὴ δ' ἄγροι ὕδαρ, καὶ δειδάειν ὑψηπύτηλον, &c.

*Laertes'* son : girt with circumfluous tides,  
 He still calamitous constraint abides.  
 Him in *Calypso's* cave of late I view'd, 755  
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.  
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move  
 Th' enamour'd Goddess, or elude her love :  
 His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,  
 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760  
 But oh belov'd by heav'n ! reserv'd to thee  
 A happier lot the smiling Fates decree :  
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway  
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay ;  
*Elysium* shall be thine ; the blissful plains 765  
 Of utmost earth, where *Rhadamanthus* reigns.

“ Cum clamore ruit magno, manicisque jacentem

“ Occupat : ille suæ contra non immemor artis,

“ Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,

“ Ignemque, horribilemque feram, fluviumque liquen-

tem, &c.

*Homer* has a manifest advantage in the occasion of the story : the loss of a few bees seems to be a cause too trivial for an undertaking so great as the surprise of a Deity : whereas the whole happiness of *Menelaus* depends upon this consultation of *Proteus* : this is a far more important cause, and consequently in this respect something more is due to *Homer* than the sole honour of an inventor.

y. 765. *Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains  
 Of utmost earth, &c.*

Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,  
 Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :  
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :  
 The fields are florid with unfading prime : 770  
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,  
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;  
 But from the breezy deep the Blest inhale  
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.  
 This grace peculiar will the Gods afford 775  
 To thee the son of *Jove*, and beauteous *Helen's* Lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,  
 Beneath the God the whirling billows bound.

This is the only place in which the *Elysian* field is mentioned in *Homer*. The conjectures of the Ancients are very various about it: *Plato* in his *Phæd.* places it in *cælo stellato*, or the region of the Stars ; but since *Homer* fixes it *εἰς τοῖς πάλαι γαίης*, or (as *Milton* expresses it) at the *earth's green end*, I will pass over the conjectures of others, especially since the *παράδεισος Νήσι*, by which others express *Elysium*, confine it to this world.

*Strabo*, says *Eustathius*, places it not far from *Maurusia*, that lies near the Streights : it is supposed by *Bochart*, as *Dacier* observes, that the fable is of *Phœnician* extraction, that *Alizuth* in *Hebrew* signifies joy or exultation, which word the *Greeks*, adapting to their way of pronounciation, called *Elysus*. If this be true, I should come into an opinion that has much prevailed, that the *Greeks* had heard of *Paradise* from the *Hebrews* ; and that the *Hebrews* describing *Paradise* as a place of *Alizuth*, or joy, gave occasion to all the fables of the *Grecian Elysium*.

Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,  
 My friends attending at the shore I fought. 780  
 Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we controul,  
 Till night with silent shade invests the pole;  
 Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest. —  
 Soon as the morn reveals the roseate East,  
 With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh,  
 Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea. 786  
 Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars  
 White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.  
 Then steering backward from the *Pharian* Isle,  
 We gain the stream of *Jove*-descended *Nile*: 790  
 There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore  
 With ritual hecatombs the Gods adore:  
 Their wrath aton'd, to *Agamemnon*'s name  
 A Cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.  
 These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795  
 The friendly Gods a springing gale inlarg'd:  
 The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,  
 Till *Grecian* cliffs appear'd, a blissful view!

Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate  
 A story, fruitful of disastrous fate: 800

And now, young Prince, indulge my fond  
request;

Be *Sparta* honour'd with his royal guest,  
'Till from his eastern goal, the joyous sun  
His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.

Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805  
Three sprightly coursers, and a polish'd car :  
With these, a goblet of capacious mould,  
Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,  
(Form'd for libation to the Gods) shall prove  
A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810

My quick return, young *Ithacus* rejoin'd,  
Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :  
Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,  
Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,  
Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815  
While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.  
But now to *Pyle* permit my destin'd way,  
My lov'd associates chide my long delay :

\*. 806. *Three sprightly coursers.*] How comes it to pass that *Menelaus* proffers three horses to *Telemachus*? This was a compleat set among the Ancients, they used one Pole-horse and two leaders. *Eustathius*.

In dear remembrance of your royal grace,  
 I take the present of the promis'd Vase; 820  
 The courfers for the champaign sports, retain;  
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain :

†. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This passage where *Telemachus* refuses the horses has been much observed, and turned to a moral sense, viz. as a lesson to men to desire nothing but what is suitable to their conditions. *Horace* has introduced it into his *Epistles*,

- “ Haud malè *Telemachus*, proles patientis *Ulyssæ*;
- “ Non est aptus equis *Ithacæ* locus, ut neque planis
- “ Porrectus spaciis, nec multæ prodigus herbæ :
- “ *Atride*, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam.”

This is the reason why *Ulysses* (as *Eustathius* observes upon the tenth of the *Iliad*) leaves the horses of *Rhesus* to the disposal of *Diomedes*; so that the same spirit of Wisdom reigned in *Telemachus*, that was so remarkable in *Ulysses*. This is the reason why *Menelaus* smiled; it was not at the frankness or simplicity of *Telemachus*, but it was a smile of joy, to see the young Prince inherit his father's wisdom.

It is the remark of *Eustathius*, that *Telemachus* is far from exalting the nature of his country; he confesses it to be barren, and more barren than the neighbouring Islands; yet that natural and laudable affection which all worthy persons have for their country, makes him prefer it to places of a more happy situation. This appears to me a replication to what *Menelaus* had before offered concerning the transplantation of *Ulysses* to *Sparta*; this is contained in ἡμεῖς γὰρ; and then the meaning is, It is true *Ithaca* is a barren region, yet more desirable than this country of *Lacedæmon*, this ἡμεῖς γὰρ. It is the more probable from the offer of horses which *Menelaus* had then made, and is also another reason for the smile of *Menelaus*.

Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows  
 Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,  
 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825  
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :  
 To sea-surrounded realms the Gods assign  
 Small tract of fertile lawn, the least to mine.

His hand the King with tender passion press'd,  
 And smiling thus, the royal youth address'd : 830  
 O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,  
 Proclaims you from the sage *Ulysses* sprung.  
 Selected from my stores, of matchless price  
 An urn shall recompence your prudent choice :  
 Not mean the massy mould of silver, grac'd 835  
 By *Vulcan's* art, the verge with gold enchas'd ;

*Eustathius* remarks that *Menelaus*, though he has expressed the greatest friendship for *Ulysses*, yet makes no offer to restore the fortunes of his friend by any military assistance ; though he had a most fair opportunity given him to repay the past kindness of *Ulysses* to his wife *Penelope* and his son *Telemachus* ; and how comes *Telemachus* not to ask it either of *Nestor* or *Menelaus* ? He answers, that this depended upon the uncertainty they were yet under, concerning the life of *Ulysses*. But the true reason in my opinion is, that the nature of Epick Poetry requires a contrary conduct ; the Hero of the Poem is to be the chief agent, and the re-establishment of his fortunes must be owing to his own wisdom and valour. I have enlarged upon this already, so that there is no occasion in this place to insist upon it.

A pledge the scepter'd pow'r of *Sidon* gave,  
When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate; while with artful care  
The menial train the regal feast prepare: 840  
The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to dye;  
Rich fragrant wines the chearing bowl supply;  
A female band the gift of *Ceres* bring;  
And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in *Ithaca*, the Sutor-pow'rs 845  
In active games divide their jovial hours:

In *Areas* vary'd with mosaick art,  
Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart,  
Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,

*Antinous* fat spectator of the sport; 850  
With great *Eurymachus*, of worth confest,  
And high descent, superiour to the rest;  
Whom young *Naëmon* lowly thus address. }

My ship equipp'd within the neighb'ring  
port,

The Prince, departing for the *Pylian* court, 855  
Requested for his speed; but courteous, say  
When steers he home, or why this long delay?



For *Elis* I should sail with utmost speed,  
 T'importtwelvesmareswhichthereluxuriousfeed,  
 And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race,  
 New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace. 861

Unknowing of the course to *Pyle* design'd,  
 A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind :  
 The Prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,  
 Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote.  
 Relate, *Antinous* cries, devoid of guile, 866  
 When spread the Prince his sail for distant *Pyle*?  
 Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main  
 Attend his voyage, or domestick train?  
 Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870  
 Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,  
 (*Noëmon* cry'd) the vessel was resign'd.  
 Who in the balance, with the great affairs 874  
 Of courts presume to weigh their private cares?  
 With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you :  
 And *Mentor*, captain of the lordly crew,  
 Or some Celestial in his rev'rend form,  
 Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,

Pilots the course: for when the glimm'ring ray  
 Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day, 881  
*Mentor* himself I saw, and much admir'd. —  
 Then ceas'd the Youth, and from the court retir'd.

Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game  
 The Suitors quit, and all to council came: 885  
*Antinous* first th' assembled Peers address,  
 Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.

O shame to manhood! shall one daring boy  
 The scheme of all our happiness destroy?  
 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890  
 Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r?  
 The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,  
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.  
 Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,  
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd; 895  
 For ambush'd close beneath the *Samian* shore  
 His ship returning shall my spies explore:

†. 896. *For ambush'd close, &c.*] We have here another use which the Poet makes of the voyage of *Telemachus*. *Eustathius* remarks that these incidents not only diversify but enliven the Poem. But it may be asked why the Poet makes not use of so fair an opportunity to insert a gallant action of *Telemachus*, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his

He soon his rashness shall with life atone,  
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

With vast applause the sentence all approve ;  
Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove : 901  
Swift to the Queen the Herald *Medon* ran,  
Who heard the consult of the dire Divan :  
Before her dome the royal matron stands,  
And thus the message of his haste demands. 905

What will the Suitors? must my servant train  
Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,

adversaries? The answer is easy; That the Suitors sailed completely armed, and *Telemachus* unprovided of any weapons; and therefore *Homer* consults credibility, and forbears to paint his young Hero in the colours of a Knight in Romance, who upon all disadvantages engages and defeats his opposers. But then to what purpose is this ambush of the Suitors, and what part of the design of the Poem is carried on by it? The very chief aim of it; To shew the sufferings of *Ulysses*: he is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a King, as an husband, and here very eminently as a father; these sufferings are laid down in the proposition of the *Odyssey* as essential to the Poem, and consequently this ambush laid by the Suitors against the life of *Telemachus* is an essential ornament,

†. 906. *The speech of Penelope.*] *Longinus* in particular commends this speech as a true picture of a person that feels various emotions of soul, and is borne by every gust of passion from sentiment to sentiment, with sudden and unexpected transitions. There is some obscurity in the *Greek*; this arises from the warmth with which she speaks, she has not leisure to explain herself fully, a circumstance natural to a person in anger,

For them to form some exquisite repast?  
 Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last!  
 Or if they still must live, from me remove 910  
 The double plague of luxury and love!  
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence! forbear,  
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.  
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,  
 Were ye not tutor'd with *Ulysses'* praise? 915  
 Have not your fathers oft' my Lord defin'd,  
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind?

*Penelope* gives a very beautiful picture of *Ulysses*: "The  
 " best of Princes are allowed to have their favourites, and  
 " give a greater share of affection than ordinary to particular  
 " persons. But *Ulysses* was a father to all his people alike,  
 " and loved them all as his children; a father, though he  
 " bears a more tender affection to one child than to another,  
 " yet shews them all an equal treatment; thus also a good  
 " King is not swayed by inclination, but justice, towards all  
 " his subjects." *Dacier*.

One circumstance is very remarkable, and gives us a full  
 view of a person in anger; at the very sight of *Medon*, *Penelope*  
*flies out into passion*; she gives him not time to speak one  
 syllable, but speaks herself as if all the Suitors were present,  
 and reproaches them in the person of *Medon*, though *Medon*  
 is just to her and *Ulysses*; but anger is an undistinguishing pas-  
 sion. What she says of ingratitude, recalls to my memory  
 what is to be found in *Laertius*: *Aristotle* being asked what  
 thing upon earth soonest grew old? replied an obligation.  
 Τὸ τάχιστα γηράσκει; respondit, χάρις.

Some Kings with arbitrary rage devour,  
 Or in their Tyrant-Minions vest the pow'r:  
*Ulysses* let no partial favours fall, 920  
 The people's parent, he protected all:  
 But absent now, perfidious and ingrate!  
 His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus; O were the woes you speak the worst!  
 They form a deed more odious and accurst; 925  
 More dreadful than your boding soul divines:  
 But pitying *Jove* avert the dire designs!  
 The darling object of your royal care  
 Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare;  
 Before he anchors in his native port, 930  
 From *Pyle* re-failing and the *Spartan* court;  
 Horrid to speak! in ambush is decreed  
 The hope and heir of *Ithaca* to bleed!

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,  
 The vital streams a chilling horror froze: 935  
 The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,  
 And on her tongue imperfect accents dye.  
 At length, in tender language, interwove  
 With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.

Why rashly wou'd my son his fate explore, 940  
 Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore?  
 Did he with all the greatly wretched, crave  
 A blank oblivion, and untimely grave!

'Tis not reply'd the Sage, to *Medon* giv'n  
 To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n, 945  
 In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd;  
 Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,  
 The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,  
 Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The Sage retir'd: unable to controul 950  
 The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,  
 Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen  
 The piteous object of a prostrate Queen.  
 Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,  
 And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955

§. 941. *Ride the wild waves*——] Were this passage to be rendered literally, it would run thus, *climb the swift ships, which are horses to men on the seas*. *Eustathius* observes the allusion is very just, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by *Penelope*? It may be doubted, if the mind could find leisure to introduce such allusions? *Dacier* answers that *Penelope* speaks thus through indignation: the grief that she conceives at the hardness of men, in finding out a way to pass the seas as well as land, furnished her with these figures very naturally; for figures are agreeable to passion.

Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,  
To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch whom all the Gods consign  
To woe! Did ever sorrows equal mine?  
Long to my joys my dearest Lord is lost, 960  
His country's buckler, and the *Grecian* boast:  
Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,  
Our other column of the state is borne:  
Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent! —  
Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent! 965  
Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,  
From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal:  
Tho' at the solemn midnight hour he rose,  
Why did you fear to trouble my repose?  
He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970  
Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.  
Bid *Dolius* quick attend, the faithful slave  
Whom to my nuptial train *Icarius* gave,  
T' attend the fruit-groves: with incessant speed  
He shall this violence of death decreed, 975  
To good *Laertes* tell. Experienc'd age  
May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,

Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot re-  
veal,

And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

Then *Euryclea* thus. My dearest dread! 980  
Tho' to the sword I bow this hoary head,  
Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,  
I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed:  
Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,  
With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd: 985  
A solemn oath, impos'd, the secret seal'd,  
'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n re-  
veal'd.

Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,  
He dar'd not violate your royal ear.

But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990  
Pay due devotions to the \* Martial maid,  
And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid. }

Send not to good *Laertes*, nor engage  
In toils of state the miseries of age:

'Tis impious to surmise, the pow'rs divine 995  
To ruin doom the *Jove*-descended line:

\* *Minerva*.



Long shall the race of just *Arcefius* reign,  
And Isles remote enlarge his old domain.

The Queen her speech with calm attention hears,  
Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears : 1000  
She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends :  
Her pious speed a female train attends :  
The salted cakes in canisters are laid,  
And thus the Queen invokes *Minerva's* aid.

†. 998. *And Isles remote enlarge his old domain.*] *Dacier* offers a Criticism upon these last words of *Euryclea* : it cannot be imagined these fertile fields can be spoken of *Ithaca* ; *Plutarch's* description of it is intirely contradictory to this : “ *Ithaca*, “ says he, is rough and mountainous, fit only to breed goats ; “ upon cultivation it scarce yields any fruits, and these so “ worthless, as scarce to recompense the labour of gathering.” *Homer* therefore by this expression intended the other dominions of *Ulysses*, such as *Cephalenia*, &c.

But I question not, that the whole dominions of *Ulysses* are included, *Ithaca* as well as *Cephalenia* ; for though *Ithaca* was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the description of it in the thirteenth of the *Odyssey*.

The rugged soil allows no level space  
For flying chariots, or the rapid race ;  
Yet not ungrateful to the Peasant's pain,  
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain :  
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,  
And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.

As for her remark upon ἀπὸ παντοῦ, it is of no validity ; the word stands in opposition to Διόμαϊα, and implies no more than *here*, or at a distance in general.

Daughter divine of *Jove*, whose arm can  
wield 1005

Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield !

If e'er *Ulysses* to thy fane preferr'd

The best and choicest of his flock and herd ;

Hear, Goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;

And for the pious fire preserve the son : 1010

His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,

And on the Suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd ; shrill extasies of joy declare

The fav'ring Goddess present to the pray'r :

The Suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice

A signal of her Hymenæal choice : 1016

§. 1015. *The Suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice  
A signal of her Hymenæal choice.*]

It may be asked whence this conjecture of the Suitors arises ? *Penelope* is described as weeping grievously, and fainting away, and yet immediately the Suitors conclude she is preparing for the nuptials. *Eustathius* answers, that undoubtedly the Suitors understood the Queen had purified herself with water, and supplicated the Goddess *Minerva*, though the Poet omits the relation of such little particularities. But whence is it that the Poet gives a greater share of wisdom to *Euryclea* than to *Penelope* ? *Penelope* commands a servant to fly with the news of the absence of *Telemachus* to *Laertes*, which could not at all advantage *Telemachus*, and only grieve *Laertes* : *Euryclea* immediately diverts her from that vain intention, advises her to

Whilst one most jovial thus accosts the board ;

“ Too late the Queen selects a second lord :

“ In evil hour the nuptial rite intends, 1019

“ When o'er her son disastrous death impends.”

Thus he unskill'd of what the Fates provide !

But with severe rebuke *Antinous* cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;

Alarm not with discourse the menial train :

The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025

Our deeds alone our counsel must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,

And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :

have recourse to heaven, and not add misery to the already miserable *Laertes* : this is Wisdom in *Euryclea*. But it must be confessed that the other is Nature in *Penelope* : *Euryclea* is calm, *Penelope* in a passion : and *Homer* would have been a very bad painter of human Nature, if he had drawn *Penelope*, thus heated with passion, in the mild temper of *Euryclea* ; grief and resentment give *Penelope* no time to deliberate, whereas *Euryclea* is less concerned, and consequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.

§. 1022. *With rebuke severe Antinous cry'd.*] *Antinous* speaks thus in return to what had been before said by one of the Suitors concerning *Telemachus*, viz. “ the Queen little “ imagines that her son's death approaches ;” he fears lest *Penelope* should know their intentions, and hinder their measures by raising the subjects of *Ithaca* that still retained their fidelity. *Dacier*.

Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,  
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030  
 Replete with mail and military store,  
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.  
 The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails;  
 (The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales)  
 Then take repast, 'till *Hesperus* display'd 1035  
 His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the Queen without refectiön due,  
 Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew:  
 In her sad breast the Prince's fortunes roll,  
 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040  
 So when the wood-man's toil her cave furrounds,  
 And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds;

ψ. 1041. *So when the wood-man's toil, &c.*] The Poet, to shew the majesty and high spirit of *Penelope*, compares her to a Lioness: he manages the allusion very artfully: he describes the Lioness not as exerting any dreadful acts of violence, (for such a comparison is only proper to be applied to a Hero) but inclosed by her enemies; which at once shews both her danger and nobleness of spirit under it: it is in the *Greek* δολιχὸν κύκλον, which may signify either a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies: the former is perhaps preferable, as corresponding best with the condition of *Penelope*, who was surrounded with the secret ambushes and snares of the Suitors. *Euzlathius*.

With grief and rage the mother-lion *stung*  
Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045  
Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;  
*Minerva*, life-like on imbody'd air  
Impress'd the form of *Iphthima* the fair :  
(*Icarius*' daughter she, whose blooming charms  
Allur'd *Eumelus* to her virgin-arms ; 1050

¶. 1047. *Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air*  
*Imprest the form, &c.]*

We have here an imaginary Being introduced by the Poet : the whole is managed with great judgment ; it is short, because it has not a direct and immediate relation to the progress of the Poem, and because such imaginary intercourses have ever been looked upon as sudden in appearance, and as sudden in vanishing away. The use the Poet makes of it, is to relieve *Penelope* from the extremity of despair, that she may act her part in the future scenes with courage and constancy. We see it is *Minerva* who sends this phantom to *Penelope* to comfort her : now this is an allegory to express that as soon as the violence of sorrow was over, the mind of *Penelope* returned to some degree of tranquillity : *Minerva* is no more than the result of her own reflection and wisdom, which banished from her breast those melancholy apprehensions. The manner likewise of its introduction is not less judicious ; the mind is apt to dwell upon those objects in sleep which make a deep impression when awake : this is the foundation of the Poet's fiction ; it is no more than a dream which he here describes, but he clothes it with a body, gives it a momentary existence, and by this method exalts a low circumstance into dignity and Poetry.

A scepter'd Lord, who o'er the fruitful plain  
Of *Theffaly*, wide stretch'd his ample reign :)

As *Pallas* will'd, along the fable skies

To calm the Queen the Phantom-sister flies.

Swift on the regal dome descending right, 1055

The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.

Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,

And thus performs *Minerva's* high commands.

O why, *Penelope*, this causeless fear,

To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere? 1060

Alike devout to sorrow's dire extreme

The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream !

Thy son, the Gods propitious will restore,

And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the Queen, (whilst yet her pensive  
mind 1065

Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd)

O sister, to my soul for ever dear,

Why this first visit to reprove my-fear ?

How in a realm so distant shou'd you know

From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows  
flow ? 1070

To all my hope my royal Lord is lost,  
 His country's buckler, and the *Grecian* boast:  
 And with consummate woe to weigh me down,  
 The heir of all his honours, and his crown,  
 My darling son is fled! an easy prey 1075  
 To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:  
 Who in a league of blood associates sworn,  
 Will intercept th' unwary Youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,  
 In the protecting care of heav'n confide: 1080

†. 1073. *And with consummate woe, &c.*] In the original, *Penelope* says plainly, she is more concerned for her son than her husband. I shall translate *Dacier's* observations upon this passage. We ought not to reproach *Penelope* for this seemingly shocking declaration, in preferring a son to a husband: her sentiment is natural and just; she had all the reason in the world to believe that *Ulysses* was dead, so that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon *Telemachus*: his loss therefore must unavoidably touch her with the highest degree of sensibility; if he is lost, she can have recourse to no second comfort. But why may we not allow the reason which *Penelope* herself gives for this superiority of sorrow for *Telemachus*? “*Telemachus*, says she, is unexperienced in the world, “and unable to contend with difficulties: whereas *Ulysses* “knew how to extricate himself upon all emergencies.” This is a sufficient reason why she should fear more for *Telemachus* than *Ulysses*: her affection might be greater for *Ulysses* than *Telemachus*, yet her fears might be stronger for the son than the husband, *Ulysses* being capable to surmount dangers by experience, *Telemachus* being new to all difficulties.

On him attends the blue-ey'd martial Maid;  
 What earthly can implore a surer aid?  
 Me now the guardian Goddess deigns to fend,  
 To bid thee patient his return attend.

The Queen replies: If in the blest abodes 1085  
 A Goddess, thou hast commerce with the Gods;  
 Say, breathes my Lord the blissful realm of  
 light,

Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night?

Enquire not of his doom, the Phantom cries,  
 I speak not all the counsel of the skies: 1090

†. 1089. *Enquire not of his doom, &c.*] It may be asked what is the reason of this conduct, and why should the Phantom refuse to relate any thing concerning the condition of *Ulysses*? *Eustathius* answers, that if the Phantom had related the full truth of the story, the Poem had been at an end; the very constitution of it requires that *Ulysses* should arrive unknown to all, but chiefly to his wife, as will appear in the prosecution of the story: the question is very natural for an affectionate wife to make concerning an absent husband; but this being an improper place for the discovery, the Poet defers the solution of it, till the unravelling of the whole in the conclusion of the Poem.

The action of this book takes up the space of two nights and one day, so that from the opening of the Poem to the introduction of *Ulysses* are six days completed.

But how long a time *Telemachus* afterwards staid with *Mene-laüs* is a question, which has employed some modern *French*



Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,  
The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift thro' the valves the visionary fair  
Repas'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.  
The Queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes: 1095  
With florid joy her heart dilating glows:  
The vision, manifest of future fate,  
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the Suitors plough the wat'ry  
plain,

*Telemachus* in thought already slain! 1100

When sight of less'ning *Ithaca* was lost,  
Their sail directed for the *Samian* coast,  
A small but verdant Isle appear'd in view,  
And *Afteris* th' advancing Pilot knew:

Criticks; one of which maintains, that he staid no longer than these two nights at *Lacedæmon*: but it is evident from the sequel of the *Odyssey*, that *Telemachus* arrived again at *Ithaca* two days after *Ulysses*; but *Ulysses* was twenty-nine days in passing from *Ogygia* to *Ithaca*, and consequently during that whole time *Telemachus* must have been absent from *Ithaca*. The ground of that Critick's mistake was from the silence of *Homer* as to the exact time of his stay, which was of no importance, being distinguished by no action, and only in an Epifodical part. The same thing led me into the like error in the Note on *ſ. 421* of the second book, where it was said that *Telemachus* returned to *Ithaca* in less than twelve days.

An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105  
To break the rolling waves, and ruffling storm:  
That safe recess they gain with happy speed,  
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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